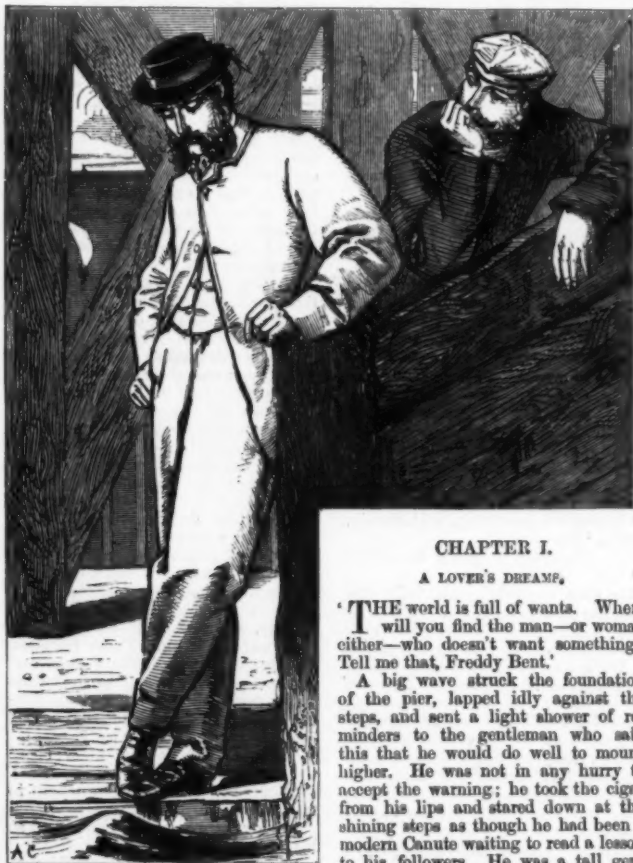


# LONDON SOCIETY.

OCTOBER, 1864.

WANTED—A WIFE, WITH MONEY.



## CHAPTER I.

### A LOVER'S DREAM.

'THE world is full of wants. Where will you find the man—or woman either—who doesn't want something? Tell me that, Freddy Bent.'

A big wave struck the foundation of the pier, lapped idly against the steps, and sent a light shower of reminders to the gentleman who said this that he would do well to mount higher. He was not in any hurry to accept the warning; he took the cigar from his lips and stared down at the shining steps as though he had been a modern Canute waiting to read a lesson to his followers. He was a tall gentleman, with black hair and moustaches, features pale but well cut, and grey eyes at

once keen and indolent.

'Come up on deck, old fellow,' responded Freddy Bent, 'or one of your wants

will be dry clothes. Look out, Carisford, there's another coming.'

Sir Guy Carisford, thus apostrophised, raised his head slowly. He saw distant sails, tiny sheets of gleaming white in some sudden sunbeam; ripples of foam on the blue water far away; crags shining coppery red in the evening light, and the muscular figure of his friend Freddy Bent leaning carelessly over the chains of the pier.

'What is your want, David?' said Sir Guy.

Freddy laughed.

'Haven't you forgotten that? I'm not like David now, Carisford.'

'No, it would take a good many years of sheep-feeding in the wilderness to develop all that muscle and bronze. I asked a question, David.'

'What is my want? Rather what isn't it, Guy? Well, principally I think it is that beautiful hazy uncertainty and delusion, a place under government.'

'Pshaw!'

Sir Guy moved up the steps and began to walk up and down speculatively.

'From bare boards to matting, from matting to carpet and greatness, Freddy, or to be made a queen's messenger; that is your want. Never fear, you'll get it in time. Now for mine. Isn't it written on my forehead?'

'No; but I can tell you what it ought to be. You should marry, Guy Carisford.'

'Exactly. So I would if I could find a wife with the requisite qualifications.'

'Meaning—'

'Meaning money, Freddy Bent.'

'Money is a good thing,' said Freddy, slowly, 'but—'

'Love is better, eh, young Corydon?'

'Yes.'

Sir Guy stopped in his walk and flung his cigar into the sea.

'I wonder what it's like—that stuff that very young boys and girls profess to feel before they get married. Tell me five years hence, Freddy. Men and women marry, and the world goes on, a jaded old mill-horse but game to the last, so far as the wheel is concerned; but how many marriages do you think have any love in them? No, no; it's a mutual-benefit association, old fellow. What you haven't got you want, and must look for a wife who has it.'

'You don't mean all that, Guy; you know you don't.'

'But I do mean it, David. It was impressed upon me in my cradle, and given to me in my pap—if ever I took the compound. My father mortgaged

his acres and spent the money right royally; and I was brought up to marry an heiress. Why shouldn't I?'

But Freddy was thinking of a time long ago when this man nursed him through a sharp illness as tenderly as a woman could have done; and he did not answer. You see he was romantic, and thought it a horrible thing for a man to aim deliberately at marriage for money.

'Look there, Freddy,' said Sir Guy, 'that little pink boat about marks the spot we plunged from this morning. What a lot of muffs the bathers are here! but they don't come to bathe. I saw one great fellow tottering out with a rope in his hand. You and I have seen some swimmers in our time, haven't we? Come, Freddy, this is getting stale.'

The two gentlemen passed through the toll-gate towards the end of the esplanade. The road was thronged with carriages, and they had to wait a little before they could cross to get to the hotel. While they waited, one in the line of carriages stopped, and Freddy Bent ran up to it.

Sir Guy leaned against the iron partition watching his friend, and I am afraid that the curl of his handsome lip was a little sarcastic. Freddy seemed so very much in earnest about everything; and there he was talking and laughing as if his whole heart were in it, as a pale glove was held out to him, and a pleasant young face under a straw hat smiled down upon him.

'The Saltouns, I suppose,' said Sir Guy, when the carriage had passed on.

'Yes, they do the thing in style, you know; a house in its own grounds—not much of grounds, by the way, to speak of. I say, you can't dine yet; let's have a climb over the rocks.'

Sir Guy shrugged his shoulders slightly. 'Thank you—I've outgrown that sort of thing. These Saltouns, Freddy; two young ladies, a papa and mamma, so far as I could see. But the young ladies are not sisters, only cousins. Which is Miss Saltoun, the heiress? the one who spoke to you last?'

'Yes. What do you know about them?'

'Simply that I came down here to marry Miss Saltoun.'

Freddy recoiled a step and stared at his companion.

'That is, of course, if I could persuade her to have me,' added Sir Guy, calmly.

'You!' stammered Fred. 'You don't even know her.'

No, but I hope to do so.'

'May one ask how?'

'Certainly. Through your means, David.'

'I—I'm afraid I can't promise, Sir Guy.'

The baronet put his hand on Freddy's shoulder and smiled.

'Well, go for your walk, David. You will be late for dinner.'

Freddy turned away in his perplexity and walked a few steps. But Sir Guy and he had been friends for many years, and Freddy was softhearted. The baronet was a great man in his estimation, as, indeed, he was in the estimation of others. Matchmaking mammas were affectionately disposed towards him, notwithstanding that report said he was an embarrassed man. Report might lie, and if not, he was a baronet; he contrived to live in society, and would doubtless contrive to support a wife. Men of mark looked after him when he passed, with interest and curiosity. If report told the truth, how did he live? He was seen everywhere; he had travelled; he must spend money. There was only one solution of the problem whispered occasionally by daring lips; did he gamble? But Sir Guy only smiled when the whisper reached him; no, he never gambled; he practised the strictest economy, and took the best possible care of his affairs, that was all. He had no taste for vice in any form; he liked all that was good and honourable and upright; only he was straitened for means, and he had been brought up to marry an heiress, and clear his estate.

When Freddy Bent had walked those few steps he repented, turned back, and took his friend's arm.

'We won't quarrel, old fellow.'

'No, David.'

And Sir Guy's tone had a certain musical kindness in it which Freddy had heard before and fancied he understood.

'You like to paint yourself in ugly colours, Guy. I was a fool to be touchy, but you see I shouldn't like Alice Saltoun to fall a victim to a—fortune-hunter. I'll get you the introduction, and I'll warn her against you.'

'As what?'

'As a man with no heart,' said Freddy, laughing. 'And then if you should fall in love—'

'Hush, David; that's a stupid way of speaking. I'm not going to fall in love with anybody: don't believe in it. I'm going to try for a wife, that's all—with money. You don't think that I shouldn't be good to her, do you?'

'Carisford, you are thirty; six years older than—'

'Five-and-twenty, believe me; that has been my age for the last five years. Postpone your walk, David; I take your offer. You shall introduce me to Saltoun père, and we'll talk about the Colonial Restriction Bill, or how the last gridiron fared in Committee, or some other weighty matter on which we are both profoundly ignorant, and consequently profoundly wise. And now let us dress and dine. Wasn't there a concert to be walked through?'

## CHAPTER II.

### FREDDY BENT MAKES A BLUNDER.

'Sir Guy, and once again Sir Guy' said Mrs. Saltoun to herself. 'A fortnight ago we did not even know the man, and now this is the third riding party, to say nothing of walks and boating excursions, which keep me in perpetual terror. Where are you bound for, young people?' she added through the open window.

'The downs, mamma.'

'The downs! Well, you know best, of course, but there's nothing to see there except a big goose-pond, is there?'

'No, nothing to see. I wish you would come too. A good breezy gallop would freshen you up for the day.'

'I dare say, Charlotte. I'll take it vicariously, my dear, if you please. Sir Guy will return to luncheon with you, of course?'

The baronet took off his hat, with an expression of regret that he had letters to write, and should be obliged to go back to the hotel.

'She never asks me,' murmured Freddy, in an aside to Miss Saltoun.

'Because she knows it isn't necessary.'

'Give me a minute or two, Alice,' said Freddy, in a low tone. 'There is no speaking to you in these days, and I have something to say.'

'Let them go first, then, and mind the hurdy-gurdies.'

Sir Guy saw the little manoeuvre and made no effort to change his position. He was very thoughtful and grave, and there was no trace in his manner of the careless nonchalance which had offended Freddy Bent a fortnight ago. When they got away from the streets, the hurdy-gurdies, and German bands, and performing monkeys, and reached the open common, he might have fallen back to join the two in the background, according to custom, but Sir Guy did not do this. Charlotte Saltoun spoke

to him, and he roused himself to answer, but was astonished to find how the necessity irritated him. A great level down lay before them, and in the distance a low line of hills, all purple and gold in the sunlight; but it was not their beauty that made the baronet thoughtful. He was wondering what Freddy Bent had got to say to Alice Saltoun. Was it possible that Fred had any such views as his own, after all, or was it, as he had believed hitherto, nothing but a boy and girl friendship? Anyhow Sir Guy caught himself condemning it. He was anxious and uneasy; his usual composure and self-possession were unattainable; and polite as his companion found him he wished more than once that she was a hundred miles away.

'Here's mamma's goose-pond,' said Charlotte Saltoun, suddenly, as the whole flock swept flapping and screaming across the path. 'And now I wish those geese were all swans, for my horse isn't going to stand that. Don't trouble, Sir Guy, I shall manage very well.'

Sir Guy looked after her and acquiesced, only following at a slower pace than hers, and uttering a low vituperation against the goose-pond. He did not know that he should feel positively friendly towards it when he came back.

'Charlotte is a perfect horsewoman,' said Miss Saltoun, 'and your friend knows what he is about, Freddy.'

'Tell me what you think of him, Alice,' said the young man, abruptly.

Miss Saltoun sent a curious glance into his face and laughed.

'I think, Freddy, that he would look better if he cut off his moustache.'

Freddy uttered a hasty ejaculation, and then went up close to Alice.

'You never speak in that light way to Carisford,' he said, reproachfully.

'I haven't known him quite so long as I have known you, Freddy Bent.'

'That's true. We have always been on good terms, Alice, haven't we?'

'To be sure we have; I hope we always shall be. What's the matter, Fred?'

'I don't know. I don't want you to lose your heart to Carisford, Alice.'

The expression of Miss Saltoun's face ought to have warned Freddy that he had better be quiet, but he was looking down, and did not see it.

'Of course your wishes would be sufficient in any case. May I ask why you express them?'

'Because he has no heart to give in return.'

'What an uncomfortable state of

things! I suppose you mean that he is already appropriated?'

'No, I don't.'

'Then he has been engaged, and she is dead, or has jilted him. What a shame!'

Freddy shook his head.

'Alice, Carisford is a very good fellow, and my friend, but—'

'A very friendly part you seem inclined to act,' she retorted, turning upon him with a little scorn. 'Did you ever hear the aspiration, "Save me from my friends," Freddy Bent? If you don't take your hand from my bridle I'm afraid I shall be obliged to hurt it. You and I know how we stand, of course, but the rest of the world may not be so wise.'

It was just at this juncture that Sir Guy reined in his horse and looked round. He turned away quickly, and spoke to his companion with a slight smile.

'Perhaps we had better not go back that way, Miss Saltoun.'

'You don't know how you minister to my self-importance, Sir Guy,' returned the young lady. 'I was Miss Saltoun once, before my cousin came to us. I have fallen, you see. I am simply Miss Charlotte, a person of no consequence at all. Why are we not to go back that way?'

'Well, I thought perhaps we might be *de trop*.'

Charlotte gave him a puzzled glance, and then laughed.

'Oh dear no; we never think of Freddy in that way. We were children together, you know. He is like a brother, only brothers won't always be made useful; besides, poor Fred has a weakness.'

'A weakness!'

'Yes, it is the best term I can think of; the others are all commonplace. But you, his friend, and not know that!' added Charlotte, raising her eyebrows.

'Shall we join them now, Sir Guy?'

A strange sort of light came over Sir Guy's face, like a reflection from the golden gleams on those distant hills.

'Yes,' he said, 'let us go back. Poor old David! So he has a weakness!'

'Stop, Sir Guy; I had no business to let it out. I thought, of course, that what David knew Jonathan must know. You will promise not to tease him or betray me.'

'I promise—anything.'

'Anything?' said Charlotte, quickly. 'Then you will come to the ball at the assembly rooms?'

'Of course I will.'

Freddy said you hated balls, and he



knew that you would not punish yourself.

'Freddy was right,' said the baronet, gravely. 'I would not punish myself willingly; and in a general way I am not fond of balls, but—'

'It is different at the seaside, is it not? One is apt to get dull; but really we do pretty well here.'

And then they rode on; and somehow it fell to Sir Guy's lot to be near Alice when she dismounted in the little shrub-

bery of the 'house in its own grounds.'

Freddy Bent saw Sir Guy stoop slightly to say something as she gathered up the folds of her riding dress; but her head was turned away, and he only knew by that strange gleam of light which passed again over Sir Guy's face that she had answered him at all. Freddy gave a little groan, and washed his hands of them all.

'You told us a fib, Freddy,' said Charlotte, looking after the baronet. 'Jona-



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than is the most fascinating man I ever saw, and he is coming to the ball.'

'Two of them!' murmured Freddy, lifting up his hands. 'What is there about this man that draws everybody towards him? And if they only knew what I know, what would they think of him then?'

### CHAPTER III.

'WAS IT QUITE PRUDENT?'

Mrs. Saltoun put the question to herself first, and then to her husband. She could not always go out with Charlotte and Alice; it was impossible. They would wear her out. And Mr. Saltoun shrugged his shoulders and said, 'Let

them alone, they're old enough to take care of themselves. As for Carisford, he's one of the most sensible men I ever met, and surely you're satisfied to trust them with Freddy Bent.'

And then Mrs. Saltoun gave up the point, and thought a little bit about the days when she was young, and should have enjoyed the rambles on these sunny days as much as any of them.

'Well, I have had my summer,' she said, with a little sigh. 'It's very short to look back upon, and I'm a sober old woman, and know that there never was a day in it as bright in possession as fancy and anticipation had pictured it beforehand. They have got all this to find out—those light-hearted young people who think life is made of roses.'

Perhaps they had, but if so it did not seem to trouble them much. To Freddy Bent, who had known Sir Guy so long, the change in him was wonderful. All his affectation of indolent carelessness was gone, and he could perform feats of rowing and scaling dangerous crags for wild flowers, which his friend would never have conceived possible. And then poor David had blundered, and was aware of it. If Alice had been totally indifferent to Sir Guy before, she would have thought of him after those broken, mysterious hints of Freddy's. A young girl is always sorry for a man who has had some disappointment or grief to bear; and she could not or would not draw any other inference than this from Freddy's words. She was a little indignant at them too. It was hardly her idea of a true friendship that one of these two should throw out hints concerning the other; and Freddy's hesitating, 'Carisford is a good fellow, but—' recurred to her constantly as pitiful and unworthy of him.

They were to meet at the assembly rooms, she knew, for this had been the purport of Sir Guy's speech when she stood in the drive gathering up her riding dress. Alice was hardly conscious herself of the subtle element which had begun to steal into her thoughts about this man. If you had asked her what she thought of him she could not have told. She would have said, perhaps, that he interested her because he was unlike other men, because his talk was not frivolous, but had often in it a power and beauty which made her grave by its very fascination. She never said those small nothings to him which formed great part of her conversation with other gentlemen. She never parried his occasional appeals to her with a smart rejoinder or a sarcasm; and she had not examined herself suffi-

ciently to find out why this seaside holiday had a certain source of interest which other holidays had wanted. Freddy's innuendoes might have passed unnoticed, perhaps, but that Alice was getting used to such warnings, and understood too well what they generally meant. She had been obliged already to answer some half-dozen aspirants for her hand, i.e., her fortune; but then these things were so patent that they gave her no pain. This was another affair altogether.

As she leaned out of the window of her own room, thinking about it, watching the chalky glitter of the white houses in the sun, Sir Guy's face came before her. There was truth and nobleness in it, she thought. How was it possible to suffer any mean, ungenerous suspicions to take possession of her mind? Besides—and at this 'besides' a slight smile stole to her lips, and a colour, which was not the reflection of any sunbeam, came into her face. It was of no use to say 'besides,' for Sir Guy's manner had been such as no woman could mistake. She should see him again at the ball. It is to be feared that this was principally the substance into which poor Freddy's well-meant hints resolved themselves.

'Lady Downham is jealous of you, Alice,' said Charlotte Saltoun, as she stood arranging her dress before the glass. 'She told Colonel Brand that you rouged, and asked him to introduce Sir Guy. By the way, I can't conceive why you persisted in putting on that white thing again. Lady Downham will recognize it. You, who might have a dress for every day in the year if you liked.'

'I wear this dress because white suits me,' responded Alice; 'and what is the use of getting a new one when this is just as good as new?'

Charlotte made a little grimace of dissent.

'Upon my word I think the fates have made a mistake this time; you don't know how to spend your money in the least.'

'No, Charlotte, I don't think I do. I'm not at all sure that it's a happy thing to be an heiress.'

'Some ladies wouldn't object to try,' said Charlotte, drily. 'Why isn't it happy?'

'I said I wasn't sure about it. People seem to think it ought to make one suspicious, a thing that I hate. I wish you wouldn't talk so much about it.'

'Who has made you suspicious now, Alice; Sir Guy?'

Charlotte was occupied with her

dress, and did not see the sudden colour that rose over her cousin's face at the name.

'What is Sir Guy to me?' said Alice, shortly; 'or to you either, Charlotte, that you are always bringing him forward? He is——'

'Ready, children?' broke in Mrs. Saltoun, rousing herself. 'We are very late.'

'Coming, mamma, in one moment. Well, Alice, finish if you please. What is Sir Guy?'

But Alice had lost her vivid colour, and answered with cool indifference.

'I don't know; a disappointed man, perhaps. It is nothing to us.'

'Well, I wouldn't be sure of that. The hypothesis explains a look of "patient sadness," which I have seen on his face, certainly, but——Yes, mamma, we are quite ready.'

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A LITTLE TABLEAU VIVANT.

The tide was rising; it crept on over the sand, and rustled amongst the pebbles on the beach; higher still, and it lapped against the rocks under a smart green balcony, into which the windows of the ball-room opened. Then the moon got up and turned her light upon two people who had come out of the hot crowded ball-room into the balcony. These were Sir Guy Carisford and Miss Saltoun. Alice wore a white cloak fastened at the throat with a clasp that glittered and flashed in the moonlight. The flowers in her hair were white, and her bouquet was white. Within the ball-room the musicians were playing a 'spirit valse,' and Sir Guy smiled as he reared his tall form against the wall and looked down upon her. He would have said that there was no romance in his temperament only a fortnight ago, and now he began to wonder what kept him silent, as though by force, in the presence of this young girl, whom he had openly avowed his determination to marry. A pang passed through Sir Guy's heart at the thought, he did not know why. He did not like to remember that speech of his to Freddy. Alone here in the great silent night, under the stars, with the restless sea rustling and swooping quietly over the pebbles and the rocks beneath; something not in the scene or the hour, though these helped, had roused Sir Guy to a strange consciousness of wrong and hardness in his past life, and of something infinitely better and greater than he had ever dreamed of, which might come into his future to glorify it. Do him justice. He forgot

at this moment all his plans, all the counsels which had been impressed upon him from his boyhood. He looked down upon that shadowy figure all in white, with the moonbeams falling about her like a pale halo, and did not remember that she was an heiress.

Sir Guy changed his position, leaning forward, with one knee on the balcony and one arm over it, pointing to a distant light.

'Many a good ship has gone down there,' he said, quietly. 'Many a cry of strong despair risen up from mother and father, husband and wife. Did you ever see a wreck? I suppose not. A sight to haunt one for life. This great strong turbulent sea has much to answer for, and yet how quiet and smiling it is now. Do you know what a long sea voyage is like, Miss Saltoun?'

'No; at least not from experience. But I should like to know. I have never lost sight of land.'

Sir Guy turned towards her quickly. Was he going to tell her then that it would be the crowning triumph of his life to bear her away over those waters and witness her pleasure in the wonderful sights, which were old indeed to him, but which would be fresh and glorious again with her at his side? Some such thoughts passed through his mind, but they went no further. As Alice spoke, a sudden glare of light from the ball-room fell upon them, and Freddy Bent, stepping out with his partner, saw the little picture too late to retreat.

'Never lost sight of land!' repeated Freddy, conscious of a little awkwardness, and trying to cover it. 'Don't tell him so if you like peace. He has seen everything that is to be seen, from clouds of flying fish to the saddest sight one can look at—a dead companion, digging his own grave with a single stroke on the water. He has been everywhere, I do believe, and done everything. Why looks he so? With his crossbow he shot an albatross, measuring—who knows what?'

'I wish he had brought it home,' said Charlotte Saltoun. 'I have a great curiosity to see one.'

'Or if you want inland scenery,' pursued Freddy, 'he can take you up the dangerous but mighty Hooghley; he will stretch out before you vast masses of cocoa-nut trees, dates, bananas, and show you buffaloes grazing under them. Natives will come under his hand from Indian villages, and gesticulate, and clatter their silver rings for you; or he will take you to Barrackpore and show you the scene of the mess-room tragedy, and thence into the jungle, where you

will hear the most unearthly sounds that mortal ear can listen to. Will that do?"

"Freddy Bent is going to give a lecture at the Mechanics' Hall," said Charlotte, "and he is rehearsing. Alice, do you remember what I told you about Lady Downham? Well, I have just heard her talking about you. Did any one ever hear such a voice as that woman has, I wonder. And then her odious yellow face, and her red hair with a parrot tulip stuck in it! But every one knows what her husband married her for."

A little indescribable sensation of fear checked the smile on Miss Saltoun's lips as her cousin finished this speech.

"What was it, Charlotte?"

"Her money, to be sure. Do you suppose a man like that would have married such a vulgar old creature for anything else? And he never goes out anywhere with her. But the money doesn't do him much good, people say, for she leads him an awful life at home."

"So he ought to have an awful life," said Alice in a low tone. "It's a sin one could never forget; it rouses one's utmost detestation and disgust."

"What does Alice?"

"Marrying from base motives. I hope people who do that are always punished." Charlotte laughed.

"Suppose you were hard up, as gentlemen call it, pinched and in debt—"

"I would beg first, Charlotte, or starve."

"Starvation is a nice pleasant thing, easy to talk about."

"Starvation before dishonour," said Alice, abruptly.

Freddy Bent had the grace to turn his head away. No one looked at Sir Guy: no one saw how the light and kindly warmth and greatness—for there was greatness in him—faded out of his face, and left it white and cold; a rigid face, staring out into the far distance. If he had forgotten for a few brief moments, he could forget no longer. He, who a few minutes ago had looked out into the starlight with his heart full of tender thoughts, stood convicted of this sin which could never be forgotten. He had put before himself money as the first, indeed the only desirable object in marriage. The wife he would be obliged to take, of course, as a troublesome appendage, with her money, and he should have to bear with her as best he could. No voice could have been harsher with him just now than his own, no contempt more supreme than that which he poured upon himself. If they would only go away, all of them, and leave him! If some one would at least break this

terrible silence which had fallen upon them all!

"You have put a spell upon us, Alice," said Charlotte Saltoun at last, with a shiver. "You do get so terribly in earnest. But I don't think we are any of us doing right," she added, "and I am quite sure that you are not. Besides, it is time to go home; mamma is looking very jaded, and I think I am a bit tired too. Will you come in, Freddy?"

They went away, and Alice got up to follow. Then Sir Guy started from the half-kneeling position which he had been too proud to change when Freddy came out and discovered the tableau.

"Must you go?"

His voice sounded very strange to Alice; to himself it was like a funeral bell. He was bidding her good bye in his own heart, and the knowledge only drew him infinitely nearer to her. To think that he might have won her for his own, and yet that he dared not try!

"Yes," said Alice. "It is getting late. Good night, Sir Guy."

But he only stood looking down upon her, white and irresolute, as though he hardly dared to touch the hand she held out to him.

"Good night," repeated Alice.

"Good bye," responded the baronet.

"I hope that you may be as happy as you deserve to be always."

When she was gone Sir Guy stooped down as if searching for something. The light from the ball-room still fell full upon him, but he did not notice it. He had seen, a little time ago, a single white blossom fall from her bouquet upon the balcony, and now he picked this up and put it to his lips. He could not know that Alice saw the movement, but she did, and then the light was shut out and he was alone. I don't think Sir Guy saw anything of the stars, or the moonlight, or the vast sheet of water sleeping under them as he stood there, staring seawards. Alice was before him, everywhere. He saw the white flowers and the glittering clasp of her cloak; he saw the light falling upon her softly, and knew how beautiful she was, and how he loved her. This he had never known fully until tonight. And then he saw her face turn to him and change into the face of an accusing angel.

The ball-room emptied of its guests, but still Sir Guy stood motionless where Alice had left him. He thought that if she had been there still, he, in his desperation, would have told her all and

thrown himself upon her mercy; but it is probable that he miscalculated his courage. His thoughts came and went with a strange, desultory indistinctness; thoughts of those days when he wandered to and fro on the earth and saw its wonders; before this great passion and remorse had come near to wither his energies. Could he go back to his old life? And if he did, would it be possible to forget, and be as he was before? Many faces which he had known rose up before him out of foreign lands as he listened to the retreating tide; many recollections of wild adventure and daring indifference to peril; but they never hid for a moment the desperate shame and self-disgust which had come upon him to-night. He was a fallen man. He thought of his friend, and humbled himself. David, whose simplicity he had smiled at, was a wiser and better man than himself, after all. He remembered every word of the conversation which had so nearly terminated in a quarrel between them. As if he were not already sufficiently tortured, he repeated it again mentally; and when he came to this, 'Simply that I came down here to marry Miss Saltoun,' Sir Guy covered his face, into which the shame had risen burning red. He would never see her again.

The tide sank away from the rocks and back over the sand into the distance. Sir Guy leaned over the balcony, held his pilfered flower for a moment suspended, and let it drop on the rock below. Then he passed into the empty ball-room, through the few lounging figures that still surrounded the doors, and went home.

## CHAPTER V.

## SIR GUY TAKES DOWN THE ADVERTISEMENT.

'Sir Guy Carisford!'

Sir Guy sat at a writing-table with a pen in his hand, and he was revising a somewhat lengthy looking epistle. He took the note from the salver which the waiter presented to him, and put it aside.

'Wait a moment,' said Sir Guy. He finished his revision, folded, sealed, and addressed his letter.

'Let that be taken at once,' said Sir Guy, looking at the man. 'Let a messenger go with it now. You understand?'

'Certainly, Sir Guy.'

Then the baronet opened the envelope which he had put on one side. How was he to be sure that he could keep

his resolution if he did not place it beyond breaking?

'I know what that is,' said Freddy Bent from the opposite side of the room. 'I've had one. You will go, of course?'

Sir Guy did not look up, but he bit his lips, and if Freddy had been near enough he would have seen that the hand which returned the missive to its envelope shook a little.

'I'm afraid not,' replied Sir Guy. 'I leave here for town by the mail this evening.'

'Town!' ejaculated Freddy. 'Leave here! You can't be serious.'

'Very serious, indeed, Freddy.'

Freddy hesitated a moment and then went up to Sir Guy's table.

'Old fellow, something has happened. Can I do anything, or go anywhere for you?'

'No, David.'

Sir Guy's tone was gentler than usual, and Freddy lingered. Sir Guy, confident and self-assured, was one person; Sir Guy in some unknown difficulty another.

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Then the baronet put down his pen and looked straight into Freddy's face.

'David, I have been a fool. I am punished.'

Freddy's first thought was that Alice had refused him, and with a curious inconsistency he felt both sorry for Guy and angry with her. But Sir Guy read this and shook his head with a faint smile.

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'You would actually marry Alice Saltoun because you love her?' asked Freddy.

Sir Guy nodded.

'If I married her at all, which I never shall do. Hush, David, it's too late. By this time if my orders were obeyed she is reading my letter—the hardest work I ever accomplished; only a bare statement of facts.'

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'Don't,' interrupted Sir Guy. 'Old fellow, you remember the advertisement that I told you was written on my forehead? Well, it's taken down. My estates will never be cleared in that way. Now go away, David; I've more letters to write.'

Sir Guy wrote his letters, and went out. He went first to the rocks under the balcony of the assembly rooms, and

will hear the most unearthly sounds that mortal ear can listen to. Will that do?’

‘Freddy Bent is going to give a lecture at the Mechanics’ Hall,’ said Charlotte, ‘and he is rehearsing. Alice, do you remember what I told you about Lady Downham? Well, I have just heard her talking about you. Did any one ever hear such a voice as that woman has, I wonder. And then her odious yellow face, and her red hair with a parrot tulip stuck in it! But every one knows what her husband married her for.’

A little indescribable sensation of fear checked the smile on Miss Saltoun’s lips as her cousin finished this speech.

‘What was it, Charlotte?’

‘Her money, to be sure. Do you suppose a man like that would have married such a vulgar old creature for anything else? And he never goes out anywhere with her. But the money doesn’t do him much good, people say, for she leads him an awful life at home.’

‘So he ought to have an awful life,’ said Alice in a low tone. ‘It’s a sin one could never forget; it rouses one’s utmost detestation and disgust.’

‘What does Alice?’

‘Marrying for base motives. I hope people who do that are always punished.’ Charlotte laughed.

‘Suppose you were hard up, as gentlemen call it, pinched and in debt—’

‘I would beg first, Charlotte, or starve.’

‘Starvation is a nice pleasant thing, easy to talk about.’

‘Starvation before dishonour,’ said Alice, abruptly.

Freddy Bent had the grace to turn his head away. No one looked at Sir Guy: no one saw how the light and kindly warmth and greatness—for there was greatness in him—faded out of his face, and left it white and cold; a rigid face, staring out into the far distance. If he had forgotten for a few brief moments, he could forget no longer. He, who a few minutes ago had looked out into the starlight with his heart full of tender thoughts, stood convicted of this sin which could never be forgotten. He had put before himself money as the first, indeed the only desirable object in marriage. The wife he would be obliged to take, of course, as a troublesome appendage, with her money, and he should have to bear with her as best he could. No voice could have been harsher with him just now than his own, no contempt more supreme than that which he poured upon himself. If they would only go away, all of them, and leave him! If some one would at least break this

terrible silence which had fallen upon them all!

‘You have put a spell upon us, Alice,’ said Charlotte Saltoun at last, with a shiver. ‘You do get so terribly in earnest. But I don’t think we are any of us doing right,’ she added, ‘and I am quite sure that you are not. Besides, it is time to go home; mamma is looking very jaded, and I think I am a bit tired too. Will you come in, Freddy?’

They went away, and Alice got up to follow. Then Sir Guy started from the half-kneeling position which he had been too proud to change when Freddy came out and discovered the tableau.

‘Must you go?’

His voice sounded very strange to Alice; to himself it was like a funeral bell. He was bidding her good bye in his own heart, and the knowledge only drew him infinitely nearer to her. To think that he might have won her for his own, and yet that he dared not try!

‘Yes,’ said Alice. ‘It is getting late. Good night, Sir Guy.’

But he only stood looking down upon her, white and irresolute, as though he hardly dared to touch the hand she held out to him.

‘Good night,’ repeated Alice.

‘Good bye,’ responded the baronet. ‘I hope that you may be as happy as you deserve to be always.’

When she was gone Sir Guy stooped down as if searching for something. The light from the ball-room still fell full upon him, but he did not notice it. He had seen, a little time ago, a single white blossom fall from her bouquet upon the balcony, and now he picked this up and put it to his lips. He could not know that Alice saw the movement, but she did, and then the light was shut out and he was alone. I don’t think Sir Guy saw anything of the stars, or the moonlight, or the vast sheet of water sleeping under them as he stood there, staring seawards. Alice was before him, everywhere. He saw the white flowers and the glittering clasp of her cloak; he saw the light falling upon her softly, and knew how beautiful she was, and how he loved her. This he had never known fully until tonight. And then he saw her face turn to him and change into the face of an accusing angel.

The ball-room emptied of its guests, but still Sir Guy stood motionless where Alice had left him. He thought that if she had been there still, he, in his desperation, would have told her all and



thrown himself upon her mercy; but it is probable that he miscalculated his courage. His thoughts came and went with a strange, desultory indistinctness; thoughts of those days when he wandered to and fro on the earth and saw its wonders; before this great passion and remorse had come near to wither his energies. Could he go back to his old life? And if he did, would it be possible to forget, and be as he was before? Many faces which he had known rose up before him out of foreign lands as he listened to the retreating tide; many recollections of wild adventure and daring indifference to peril; but they never hid for a moment the desperate shame and self-disgust which had come upon him to-night. He was a fallen man. He thought of his friend, and humbled himself. David, whose simplicity he had smiled at, was a wiser and better man than himself, after all. He remembered every word of the conversation which had so nearly terminated in a quarrel between them. As if he were not already sufficiently tortured, he repeated it again mentally; and when he came to this, 'Simply that I came down here to marry Miss Saltoun,' Sir Guy covered his face, into which the shame had risen burning red. He would never see her again.

The tide sank away from the rocks and back over the sand into the distance. Sir Guy leaned over the balcony, held his pилfered flower for a moment suspended, and let it drop on the rock below. Then he passed into the empty ball-room, through the few lounging figures that still surrounded the doors, and went home.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### SIR GUY TAKES DOWN THE ADVERTISEMENT.

'Sir Guy Carisford!'

Sir Guy sat at a writing-table with a pen in his hand, and he was revising a somewhat lengthy looking epistle. He took the note from the salver which the waiter presented to him, and put it aside.

'Wait a moment,' said Sir Guy. He finished his revision, folded, sealed, and addressed his letter.

'Let that be taken at once,' said Sir Guy, looking at the man. 'Let a messenger go with it now. You understand?'

'Certainly, Sir Guy.'

Then the baronet opened the envelope which he had put on one side. How was he to be sure that he could keep

his resolution if he did not place it beyond breaking?

'I know what that is,' said Freddy Bent from the opposite side of the room. 'I've had one. You will go, of course?'

Sir Guy did not look up, but he bit his lips, and if Freddy had been near enough he would have seen that the hand which returned the missive to its envelope shook a little.

'I'm afraid not,' replied Sir Guy. 'I leave here for town by the mail this evening.'

'Town!' ejaculated Freddy. 'Leave here! You can't be serious.'

'Very serious, indeed, Freddy.'

Freddy hesitated a moment and then went up to Sir Guy's table.

'Old fellow, something has happened. Can I do anything, or go anywhere for you?'

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Sir Guy's tone was gentler than usual, and Freddy lingered. Sir Guy, confident and self-assured, was one person; Sir Guy in some unknown difficulty another.

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'Don't,' interrupted Sir Guy. 'Old fellow, you remember the advertisement that I told you was written on my forehead? Well, it's taken down. My estates will never be cleared in that way. Now go away, David; I've more letters to write.'

Sir Guy wrote his letters, and went out. He went first to the rocks under the balcony of the assembly rooms, and

stood there, thinking. As the tide had crept up last night so it came on now and swept across the rocks with a quiet remonstrance as he turned away. From there he passed on upwards and sat on a ledge overhanging a little bay in which they had wandered together searching for seaweed. There was no weed to be seen now; deep water covered it all, even as deep water hid the pleasant days it spoke of. I think if a judge had been appointed to mete out Sir Guy's punishment, nothing harder could have been found than this letter which he had just written. The story looked so hateful in his own eyes as he wrote it; the hero of it so mean and base. He had not spared himself a single detail, and he never asked for any hope or any answer. In that, perhaps, he was wrong, since it would be impossible for Alice to answer a letter in which no question was asked. But as Sir Guy had gone to an extreme in his previous notions concerning marriage, so he went straight to the opposite extreme now. There was one more place which he meant to visit in his spirit of self-torment. This was a sort of natural terrace up amongst the hills; where they had held a sort of pic-nic; and had been supremely happy under the usual pic-nic discomforts. He could not go round by the ordinary path to this place, but made one for himself, springing from crag to crag like a wild huntsman.

Well, the sun shone on the hills just as brightly as ever, only the music of voices and light laughter was not heard on the terrace. He sat down and called the scene back again. He looked away along the purple moorland and the line of blue hills in the distance. A haze of sunlight over all; over the quivering leaves of the low trees; the grass, burnt brown in patches, and the wealth of wild flowers scattered about amongst the crags.

He remembered that Alice had wished for one of those bits of heath growing high up in a fissure above his reach, and that he had climbed the rock to get it for her. He remembered Freddy's indolent raillery, and how little he had minded it; and then he thought of Alice with a great pang, and wondered what she thought of him. 'If she cared for me ever so little then, she doesn't now. And yet I swear that if she were penniless I would choose her before the whole world.'

Sir Guy was destined to be tried a little harder still. At this moment he sat alone on the terrace, kicking the loose stones about moodily, and wondering at the indefatigable tourists on the

rocks above him, in the blazing sun; at the next, Charlotte Saltoun and her cousin turned the corner of the rock, and stood suddenly before him.

Sir Guy's face grew white, as it had done last night on the balcony. When Charlotte Saltoun accosted him lightly, and told him that she had heard from Freddy of his shameful conduct, an insane suspicion flashed across him that Freddy had made everything public, and he did not dare to speak.

'But are you really going, Sir Guy? We made sure of you for Thursday.'

'You are very good,' responded the baronet. 'I'm afraid it will be impossible for me to stay.'

'Well, perhaps you will come back again,' said Charlotte, moving on. 'At any rate we shall see you before you go.'

Alice never said a word, never looked at him; so he knew that she had read his letter. This was just the one drop too much in Sir Guy's cup. He could have borne to go away without an answer to his letter, indeed he had told himself that he did not even hope for one; but now that Alice was there before his eyes, he could not go without speaking to her. Sir Guy had rarely in all his life acted from any sudden impulse, but he did so now. He started forward and stood beside her, looking down.

'May I say one word to you, Miss Saltoun? I have no right to ask it, but—'

And then he paused. Charlotte just looked at them, turned away, and went on down the hill. She knew nothing about Sir Guy's reasons for going away in such hot haste; she did not even know that he had written to her cousin; but she did know that no one wanted her up there on the terrace.

'I told mamma how it would be last night,' said Charlotte; 'and now there's an end to all fun. When two people get engaged, there's never any good to be done with them.'

And then she turned the corner of the rock, and was out of sight of the terrace.

'I cannot part with you in this way,' said Sir Guy. 'I meant to go away without seeing you again. I never would have sought you out; but now that you are here I cannot let you pass away for ever and stand by silent. Say at least that you forgive me.'

'If there is anything for me to forgive, Sir Guy—yes.'

'And believe, if you can, that my love for you is sincere, and that I am punished as I deserved to be. If—if

you were poor instead of rich it would be the dearest hope of my heart to win you for my wife. Is this too hard for you to believe?

'Sir Guy,' said Alice, 'if you had asked me to be your wife, without telling me all this; if afterwards I had heard it, even from your own lips, you would have darkened my whole life; as it is—'

Sir Guy turned round with a sudden hope lighting up his face.

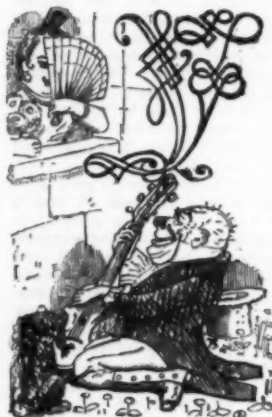
'As it is?' he repeated.

As it was, Sir Guy did not get punished as the sternest moralist would have had him punished, for he won his wife. Perhaps the very frankness of his confession, and the chivalry with which he gave up all right to be heard, were powerful agents in his favour—anyhow,

he won his wife. What they found to talk about up on the hill for the next hour or two, and what the indefatigable tourists thought of them must remain amongst the unsolved mysteries of life. When the baronet got back to his hotel the tide was a good way out, and Freddy Bent began to warn him that he would miss the train. Sir Guy looked at him in the utmost astonishment, and then he put his hand on Freddy's shoulder with a smile.

'I had forgotten all about it. Never mind the train. Old David,' said Sir Guy, gravely, 'I am not going to town. You and I are going to the Saltouns this evening, and every evening until further notice. There are people in the world more merciful than you, and I am going to marry Alice Saltoun.'

## A WEEK'S HOLIDAY.



ES! I was walking along Lombard Street, one Friday afternoon, a few weeks ago, in no very cheerful mood, for the Bank had just raised the rate of discount one per cent., and I had several promising joint-stock schemes which I wished to place upon the market. What can be done at seven per cent. is simply impossible at eight, and I felt much like a man who is kept out of his property.

While in this unpleasant frame of mind I came suddenly across a friend who was hit as hard as myself, but who was of a far more elastic disposition.

'Eight, Sam,' I said, 'I hardly expected it.'

'We shall have it higher,' was the annoying reply, 'if these joint-stock schemes increase and multiply.'

'Don't talk like a money-article,' I rejoined, 'you may just as well try to mop back the Atlantic.'

'Or swallow California,' he retorted.

'In ten years' time,' I said, somewhat pompously, 'no business requiring more than fifty thousand pounds capital will be found in any other form than that of a limited liability company.'

'Don't prophesy, but tell us what to do during the next eight days.'

'I've no idea.'

'I have: we'll go to the Low Countries. A week's tour will do us both good, and give the "precious metals" time to flow in, and ease the market. There's something soothing, in our present condition, to go where little is thought of but money-making, and where the greatest banker bears the pleasant name of Hope.'

I agreed, almost mechanically, to this plan: we dined in the neighbourhood of Cornhill, and, to be strictly truthful, I may mention that we got outside a two-penny omnibus at the corner of Bishopsgate Street.

'To start the journey cheerfully,' said Sam, 'I'll give you a conundrum. Why need our conductor have little fear of the cholera?'

Of course I gave it up.

'Because (as you heard him tell the driver) he's got ten insides.'

When we reached the 'Flowerpot,' we were asked to get down, and form two more 'insides' to oblige a costermonger.

'I've often been asked to get outside to oblige a lady,' said Sam, 'but this is quite a new sensation.'

A few minutes before seven o'clock in the evening we arrived at the Shore-ditch Station. There seemed to be something very strange, if not radically wrong, in starting for 'the Continent' from this quarter of London, but there was little time for reflection. In less than two hours we found ourselves at Harwich—that is at a platform, and a pier with a few beacon lights, and we tottered at once on board a floating hotel—the steamer 'Avalon,' belonging to the Great Eastern Railway. For those who like a little sea, there are no channel steamers fitted up with more regard to the passengers' comfort than these Rotterdam and Harwich vessels. We took a light supper, went to bed, got up in the morning, and really washed and dressed ourselves—an operation that is not often performed on board a short passage steamer for want of conveniences. At seven o'clock we were pleasantly taking our breakfast coffee on deck as we floated up the Maas to Rotterdam, and criticising scenery which is more remarkable for the industry that made it, than for any picturesque quality. Land reclaimed from the sea has the same characteristics nearly all the world over; but rural Holland has contrived to give itself a distinctive character by the introduction of many windmills.

We took the Dutch custom-house officers on board from a boat in the river, so that our luggage was examined before we arrived at Rotterdam. When we got to the pier at eight o'clock, we had, therefore, nothing to do, but to walk quietly on shore, and to enter an omnibus like ordinary citizens.

'Halloo!' shouted Sam; 'there's some imposition here. Where's our old friend, Rip Van Winkle, with the conical hat and balloon breeches? where's the immortal hero of the 'Cork Leg'?

Sam's observation was only too well founded. The men were dressed in that sad imitation of evening costume which is peculiar to Thames pilots, and it was only the poorer women who wore caps, or metal head-dresses, like helmets.

Every Dutchman smoked in the omnibus without asking leave, and a boy about six years old sucked a cigar instead of a sugar-stick. We arrived at a hotel, and were received by the master, who was smoking, and by two waiters, who had evidently just put down their cigars. We dined at a very

good *table-d'hôte*, where a pint bottle of Medoc was given to each of us, as part of the dinner, and where cigars and pipes were introduced almost before the dessert. We walked over the bridges, along the quays, and under the pleasant shade of the trees in this Dutch Venice, admired the flowers in the windows, and laughed at the mirrors so placed amongst them, that the inmates of each house could see the whole traffic of the street. While so engaged, we became suddenly conscious of an unpleasant, overpowering smell.

'What can it be?' exclaimed Sam, who was accounted a wit. 'It can't be decayed tradesmen, the town's too thriving.'

'Decayed vegetables,' I answered.

Decayed vegetables it was, for on some of the canals was floating a thick scum of cabbage leaves, lettuce leaves, corks, stalks, bits of wood, and potato-parings. Men in black mud barges were dredging some of the streams, and some of the canals looked like the old pictures of the Fleet ditch at the period when it was an open sewer, and not a shining river. The bargemen are not assisted by horses, but have to pole their craft along by digging into the bed of the river with their noses over the savory flood. The canals not only run through the streets, but under them; and looking down a grating in the middle of a roadway, we saw a Dutch Charon and his companions smoking in the cool shade of a tunnel. The roads are not very smooth, and the bridges are constantly being raised for the passage of large craft, so that riding in hack carriages is not common. These vehicles are three shillings and sixpence an hour—a price far above the Continental average. In other respects—hotel living, for example—there is no difference between Dutch or French, and Belgian prices.

'The people are wonderfully like the English in appearance,' remarked Sam, 'and wonderfully like them in their love for money making.'

'The worst preparation for a journey,' I returned, attempting to be philosophical, 'is to start with a belief that human nature is not the same in all countries. Conditions of living may differ—'

'Exactly,' interrupted Sam, showing a decided determination to cut me short; 'if you want a barber here, you go to a shop where a brass dish is fluttering before the door, like a gold fish at the end of an angler's rod; if you go to a place where the usual barber's pole is sticking

out across the street, you either find yourself at the burgomaster's, or at the office of some foreign consulate. Places where they work—their workshops, in fact—they call workhouses. Now in England a workhouse is the last house where you would look for industrial activity.

From Rotterdam we went to Amsterdam by the railway which runs to the Hague, Leyden, and Haarlem, and found that such travelling in Holland was slow, but punctual. Sam thought that Hague had been politely altered from ague, out of compliment to royalty, which had fixed its residence there, and certainly the country looked remarkably swampy. The fields, intersected by dykes instead of hedges, looked like a vast billiard-table, but rich and luxuriant.

'Ah!' exclaimed Sam, suddenly bursting into poetry,

'How weary, flat, fresh, and profitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world.'

'What must be a Dutchman's feelings,' I remarked, in a true spirit of cockney pride, 'when he first sees our Greenwich or Primrose Hill?'

'Or, what he is even more likely to see,' returned Sam, 'the *Montagne de la Cour*, at Brussels.'

In Amsterdam we, of course, found another Dutch Venice, with canals even more putrid than those of Rotterdam: 'Her home is in the sea, and the rotten cabbage-leaf clings to the marble of her palaces.'

The old Spanish houses here give the city a very picturesque effect, though as fast as they are undermined by the ever-encroaching water, and fall or are pulled down, they are replaced with Parisian-looking houses. The French have a wonderful power of propagating their ideas. French shops are on the Dutch quays and boulevards, and the French language is largely spoken by the natives. The general aspect of many of the canal streets reminded us very forcibly of Lower Thames Street, but the houses had a grand and noble look, although chiefly devoted to business. In Amsterdam, and some part of Rotterdam, the Englishman may see what life the old citizens of London led before it was the fashion to live out of the City. The cellars are devoted to goods, part of the ground floor to offices, and the drawing-room floor—large and lofty, in most cases, like the hall of some old City company—is the dwelling-house of the family. Above these are bedrooms, divided by a storehouse for mere goods, from which drops a crane-chain, when

required, in front of the drawing-room windows. In this storeroom—amongst the bales and tubs—the female domestic servants are fond of sitting on a Sunday evening, reading a book, or doing a little needlework, and flirting with their sweethearts in the distance.

Everywhere we came across the everlasting pipe and cigar, the churches even smelling of tobacco like a tap-room, during service time. The actors at the theatres did not exactly smoke during the performance, but they spat upon the stage, which is almost as bad. We went to an open-air concert, where we heard the best band in Amsterdam; but though the selection of music was ambitious—embracing all schools, from Wagner to Auber—the execution wanted fire and precision. Leaving this concert we passed through the Jews' Street, a street that rivals Petticoat Lane, or the Jews' Street in Frankfort. The Jews in Amsterdam reach sixty or seventy thousand. The maniac noises and gesticulations made to sell a few penny-worths of pickled cucumber, showed us unchecked competition in its wildest moments. The only calm man in the jumping, shrieking, bawling crowd, was an old, bent, sallow-faced hermit, with blinking sore eyes, dressed in greasy rags, who watched over a few old Hebrew books displayed in a dirty basket. Perhaps there was something in him of the spirit of Erasmus, but why was he so dirty?

Before we left Holland we had some idea of going to Germany, but the trains to that country were so slow—something like twenty miles an hour being an express pace, that, as our time was very short, we gave up the notion.

'Do you understand much German?' I asked Sam, who was somewhat daring as a linguist.

'About a sausage and a half,' he answered, as if that was quite sufficient.

'Then, I think,' I returned, 'we'd better go to Belgium.'

To get to Belgium we had to go back to Rotterdam, and we made another railway circuit, this time by the way of Utrecht. The country was still as flat as a billiard-table, and as fresh as much water could make it. At Rotterdam we went on board a steamer, much like the Rhine boats, and sailed up the Rhine to Dordrecht, and from there to Moordyk. On board this steamer we met the only two very fat Dutchmen we had seen, well fed and well dressed; 'clothed, as Sam put it, 'in turtle and fine linen. They gulped Dutch bitters before we started to give them an appetite, and as

soon as the vessel began to move, they plunged down into the cabin and took their places at a very good *table-d'hôte* dinner. Here they ate bits of every dish, drank several French and German wines, and then went on deck and ordered coffee. As soon as the coffee was consumed, they sipped brandy and sugar, and by the time that was consumed we had arrived at Moerdyk. Here the Dutch-Belgian railway awaited us, and we took our places for Antwerp. The travelling was just as slow as on the Dutch-Rhenish line, broken by an examination of luggage at the Belgian frontier. The passport nuisance is now happily got rid of in most parts of the Continent, thanks to the liberality of the French Emperor.

Antwerp may be shortly described as a fortified monastic town, with a fringe of docks—a combination of Canterbury and Wapping. The great election struggle between the clerical and liberal party was at its height, and the people in one of the low quarters, were erecting an image to a favourite saint. The most poetical thing about the churches is their clear, ringing, musical chimes, and next to that their grey, worn exteriors. Many of them, however, are in such a state that they are obliged to be restored, a process which largely destroys their picturesque character. The interiors are mostly overloaded with decoration—bright wooden carvings, wonderful in their way, marble altarpieces and pictures, all piled up together, or over each other, until the effect produced is that of a bazaar, like the Pantheon in Oxford Street. The grand simplicity of the Rouen churches is wholly wanting. Much, of course, is made of Rubens; but Rubens—colour excepted—was of the earth, earthy, and sadly deficient in true religious sentiment. Here, as in Holland, French house architecture is gradually replacing the fine old Spanish style, and the Hôtel de Ville is being restored in a way which makes it look like the Carlton Club.

From Antwerp we, of course, went to Brussels—that little Paris, which every man should see who wishes to thoroughly enjoy the greater city. Everywhere we appeared to be meeting our compatriots, the travelling English. At our hotel in the *Place Royale* we were treated like true Britons, and were supposed to be pining for beefsteaks at every hour in the day. To make this supposition more unjust, we, in common with the rest of the English, simply breakfasted upon eggs and bread-and-butter, while the only French party in

the house were devouring beefsteaks and potatoes. The 'Cock-a-Doodle-Do' coach called for us every morning to go to Waterloo, and the guard of the 'Cock-a-Doodle-Do' aroused us every morning with the 'British Grenadiers,' badly played on a cornopean. Instead of going, however, to the field of battle, we mused upon the emptiness of human glory. The blood that was spilt on that great day has merely manured the fields until they show an exceptional fertility, and has sustained an English four-horse coach for many seasons.

While resting at Brussels we felt a growing desire to use the travellers' privilege of grumbling at the dinner-table. Sam began it. They brought us a leg of mutton and 'trimmings,' and when abroad, we like to leave the cookery of our native land behind us. The joint, as is too often the case when foreign meat is cooked in the English fashion, was decidedly, hopelessly tough.

'Do lambs ever have wooden legs, like Greenwich pensioners?' asked Sam.

'Why?' I inquired.

'Because if they do, we've got one of them, by mistake.'

The French wine was bad and dear, but still we ventured upon a little Champagne.

'What brand is that?' asked Sam, showing me the cork.

'*Perrière Jout*,' I answered.

'Ah!' said Sam, '*Perrière Jout, c'est ça*, and sometimes *u* and *y*.'

When some very suspicious-looking beef was brought on by way of an *entrée*, Sam was compelled to address himself to the waiter, and he said—

'I don't mind dining *à la carte*, but I object very much to dine *à la carte* and horse.'

'*Oui, M'sieu*,' replied the waiter, who hardly understood a word he said, and who immediately brought him a *hors-d'œuvre* of boiled salmon.

In the evening we attended a very good open-air concert, where the music was much better, although the admission fee was only half a franc, than it was at our two-franc concert in Amsterdam.

We also went to a popular half-franc theatre, called the *Théâtre-Lyrique*, where three or four thousand people, chiefly of the middle class, were assembled to witness a six-act drama entitled *Le Jémitte*. The plot of the play was of the *Hypocrite* class, designed to show the baneful influence which Jesuits may obtain over the female members of families. Every time the Jesuit came on, every time he moved across the stage, or made a 'point,' the whole



audience howled at him like good-humoured wild beasts. The actor, a Frenchman, was popular, as was shown by great applause at the end of the piece; but the demonstration was made against the Jesuits. After witnessing this piece and its reception, we were not astonished at the electoral excitement which we met with everywhere.

Having seen that the Hôtel de Ville, the fine old houses near it, the old palace, and the mannikin were still standing, in spite of the French architectural invasion, we started for Ghent, where the electoral fever was still more strikingly manifested. The grand old market-places, vast, half-deserted areas as large as Russell Square, with the grass growing at their sides, were filled with nearly the whole population of the city. The voting was by ballot, the ballot-boxes were kept open until late at night, and yet no evil resulted, either from the mode or time of voting.

'It seems a pity,' I said, 'that a people who show so much political life, should allow their country to be the hot-bed of protection.'

'It seems a pity,' said Sam, 'that a people who show so much political life, should wear one of the clumsiest sabots ever tolerated. The economy of wooden shoes I can understand; but there must be much bad conservatism lingering in a country where the people shuffle about in a sabot like a barge which has to be kept on the foot with hay stuffed behind the heels.'

From Ghent we went to Bruges, another fine, old, half-deserted city, where the grass was growing in some of the streets, and bare-footed friars were to be met with in the clerical quarters. The size of the grand square struck us here, as at Ghent, and we easily imagined how much more important these cities must have been than the City of London, before the latter threw down its walls, and spread over the adjacent country.

From Ghent we went to Ostend, and after carefully inspecting it, admitted that it was one of the most sensible watering places which we had seen for a long time. Nearly everything in the shape of amusement is ranged along the sea-shore. There is an admirably paved and misad promenade, more than a mile in length, and on the land side of this is built the Kursaal, the Bath-rooms, and a number of restaurants and cafés. The visitors live here by the sea-side, and not, as in English watering-places, at frowly lodgings. They get all their meals exactly when they want them, at the restaurants and sea-side hotels, and have no quarrels with lodging-house

servants about fragments of cold mutton. Here, I am happy to say, I saw some of my countrywomen, whom I gallantly consider to be the loveliest ladies in the world, and whose complexions appeared brighter by contrast with the sallow cheeks of the Belgian damsels.

'There's the kind of girl,' I said to Sam, pointing out one of the most charming creatures on the promenade, 'who's calculated to make sunshine in a shady place.'

'The most disagreeable quality in a woman,' he replied, 'A girl that makes sunshine in a shady place would light a fire in the dog-days, and we all know what that would lead to.'

The time had now arrived for us to turn our steps homewards. Our week had expired; the Bank rate, as we had expected, had gone down one per cent.; and I, therefore, proposed that we should return from Antwerp by the long sea-passage.

'Do you know Dr. Johnson's definition of a sea-voyage?' asked Sam.

'I do,' I returned. 'Imprisonment, with the chance of being drowned.'

'My sentiments exactly,' returned Sam, 'and I think in days when we hear of Cork pilots and Deal boatmen being lost at sea, we ought not to play the fool as amateur sailors.'

'These are nice sentiments for a descendant of the hardy Norsemen.'

'I'll give you my sentiments about the hardy Norseman,' said Sam; and he immediately burst into the following song, which was original if not conclusive:—

'The hardy Norseman came over the sea—  
Luff, boys, luff, on the starboard bow—  
The "shortest sea-passage" and rail chose he—  
Pipe all hands to the starboard bow.

'Then the saltiest old salt rose up and spake,  
"Haul up coals to the top-gallant mast—  
Show the hardy Norseman we're wide awake,  
Pipe all hands to the top-gallant mast."

'You come from the land of the Vikings, boy  
(Pipe all hands to the starboard bow)  
All Ratcliff Highway wishes you joy,  
(Now, then, luff on the starboard bow).

'The sea is rolling now mountains high,  
(Let out reef on the larboard stem)  
We'll sail with the wind and the cloudy sky,  
(Let out reef on the larboard stem)."

'Said the hardy Norseman, "I hate the sea,  
So haul away, let me get on shore,  
For pitch-and-toss don't agree with me,  
So haul away, let me get on shore."

'"What do I hear?" roared the rough old tar,  
("Knock that fly off the misen mast),  
Is the hardy Norseman a land-tubbing cur?  
(Knock that fly off the misen mast).

"It cannot be that a Viking's child,—  
(What 'r'ye doing to the jib-boom sail?)  
These men are enough to drive me wild,  
(Take in reef in the jib-boom sail!)

"It cannot be that a Viking's son,  
(Who's carved my name on the quarter-deck?)  
Can despise the fame which his fathers won,  
(Who's carved my name on the quarter-deck!)"

"Said the hardy Norseman, "the stormy" sea—  
Haul away, let me get on shore—  
Had no more charms for my fathers than me,  
So haul away—let me get on shore.

"We're hardy Norsemen, and not Jack tars—  
Why can't you hold the vessel still!—  
Only used to horses or driving cars—  
Why can't you hold the vessel still?"

"We're hardy folks at a steeple chase—  
Oh, haul away, let me get on shore!"  
Then the captain howled, with a purple face,  
"Hold on, let the lubber creep on shore!"

Of course, after this, we returned by the way of Calais and Dover, and found the money-market, like ourselves, in a most healthy condition.

### QUIET LIFE IN MOUNTAIN RETREATS.



HE day wanes. It is late in the afternoon. A cool breeze has sprung up after the panting heat of that long August day, but there is such a balmy languor in the air, that we feel no wish to move, only to lie still, and drink in, without even the faintest exertion, all the transcendent loveliness of the evening scene.

The long lingering ardent gaze of the sun has now at length, only at its departure, brought a faint blush on the glaciers so impassive before, whilst the rocks have also caught the rosy tint, but below them there is repose in the deep green of the ancient pine forest.

Can it be that I am the same, the very same, who but two short weeks ago was anxiously, earnestly engaged in the daily struggle which goes on in our great metropolis? I who had listened to the never-ceasing roll of the carriages, felt the constant moral and physical jostling of my fellow-creatures—lived heart and soul in the tide and traffic

which swell our streets, until I had fondly dreamt that they were a necessity to me, and I to them? Can I be the same, who am now lying idly on the soft grass, without a care or hardly a thought except the dreamy passive ideas which seem to float listlessly about me?

Man, of whom we boast so proudly, is, after all, but a creature of circumstances, and I am not in London, but in a Swiss mountain 'pension.'

The grand tourists who, with their knapsacks and alpen-stocks, boast of doing Switzerland thoroughly in ten days, know nothing of these pleasant little retreats; and those who keep to the beaten paths of travelling, and only venture on an expedition when it has been specially recommended in Murray, may occasionally glance up from the dusty high-road, and wonder where that lovely little side-valley leads up to, but there it ends.

Go on your way, we in the 'pensions' have the best of it, after all! You have the fatigue, we the enjoyment without the fatigue. You may have seen Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, and all the other grandees, but we have been laying in a stock of health and pleasant memories, of which we shall not easily become bankrupt.

We of the mountain 'pensions' belong to quite a different class from those who go sight-seeing. We are a very quiet set, some people might even call us slow, but we think ourselves of just the right pace. Certainly flirting girls and fast young men do not come here, they do much better down below in the more con-

genial atmosphere of Interlachen, or Lucerne. Indeed I might say that the male element is almost entirely missing, unless an occasional Paterfamilias, or a son or a brother, gets smuggled in among their female relatives.

We are the weak division of that great army which marches annually through Switzerland; the widows and unprotected females, who have not the courage to face alone the rush and hurry of more frequented parts; the invalids and children who could not bear the fatigue of constant movement, and lastly the many whose slender purses would entirely collapse under the ruinous influence of hotel bills, and travelling expenses, but who find it almost an economy to live in the modest 'pensions,' where, though there is all the comfort and freedom from household cares of an hotel, yet the outgoings are small, and have little variation.

The site of a 'pension' is generally chosen on account of the beauty of the surrounding scenery; frequently there is no human habitation for miles round, but the wooden chalets of the peasants. Perhaps it is this very isolation which induces a sort of family feeling among the inmates, who, though they never met before, and probably may never meet again, yet in the strange new life which throws them together and breaks down the cold, dry reserve behind which we English love to fence ourselves, they soon begin to feel like old friends.

And when any new arrivals make their appearance, they are kindly welcomed, and the honours done to them, by those who know the place better. The prettiest walks, the shadiest nook among the pine trees, or the best spot from which to take a sketch, are all readily and willingly pointed out, whilst everything is done to draw the guests within the charmed circle of social intercourse.

A few weeks is generally the utmost that is spent in one 'pension,' then there generally comes a wish to move on to another of the same kind. Perhaps a new person arrives, and in the course of conversation says, 'Have you been to ——? such a delightful place, every one is charmed with it, and so cheap.'

'Suppose we go there?' suggests one of the hearers. Suppose we do. It does not take long to make up our minds, still less to pack up our baggage; necessarily small, where trucks are rarely to be procured, and horses or porters are the substitutes. The next morning our ponies are ordered, and

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we are off. A few heartfelt good-byes, perhaps a waving of handkerchiefs as we turn a corner and come again into sight, and we are gone. The gap looks dismal at the dinner-table that day, but it soon gets filled up with new faces, who in their turn disappear to make room for others. For the movement is constant, because the trouble of moving is so small. Those very people who, when at their own homes would have taken weeks to make up their minds to one day's expedition, will think nothing in Switzerland of being ready to start off to a new place at a few hours' notice.

Perhaps a philosopher might explain this phenomenon as having its origin in the *vis inertia* of our human nature. We are difficult to put in motion, but once set us off, and there is no stopping us.

And perhaps this long reverie of mine might never have stopped either, had I not been roused from it by a laughing voice behind me; and as I turned to see who it might come from, a party of ladies returning from their walk discovered my leafy covert. One of them immediately addressed me with 'There you are, as lazy as usual! It would have done you a great deal of good to have come with us, we have had such a delightful walk. We came upon quite a nest of ferns—such rare ones; and there was one little beauty, I had to go right into the middle of a marsh to get it, but I brought it out safe, and here it is.' And so saying she held the plant up in triumph.

I turned to look at the speaker, a merry girl, rather a favourite with us all, whose appearance on this occasion did not belie her words. The light skirt tucked up almost higher than necessary, displayed a pair of boots whose original colour and even shape was lost in a thick coating of mud, and her hands were full of flowers and ferns. Her companions seemed equally laden, though not quite so dirty.

I knew from former experience what would be the fate of those flowers. Tossed about the room for a few days, alternately on table, bed, or floor, until the delicate leaves withered, and the tiny flowerets lost their exquisite bloom, they would then be considered rubbish and thrown away. But for all that 'it was a delightful walk.'

With a parting banter at my laziness, the flower-seekers passed on, to display their treasures to other admiring eyes.

And now from my little shady nook I can see another party returning from their evening walk, but none of them stopped to address me. They are the

aristocracy of our little world. The lady is a Russian princess. Prince, by the way, is only a title of nobility in Russia, not even a very high one, and has nothing to say to the imperial family.

When this Russian princess, her two daughters, and a gentleman we took for a cousin, first made their appearance, the whole pension turned out to see, not them, but their luggage. Five trunks, besides various minor packages, almost blocked up the passage for some hours, until at last they were mounted, how, we never could exactly make out, up the narrow staircase, to the best rooms in the house, which had been ordered three weeks before. After seeing such preparations we were not surprised to see the ladies issuing forth on mountain expeditions in the latest Paris fashions, though to do them justice they never ventured very far.

Although the Russian party were always very polite, and spoke occasionally to those who sat next them at the dinner-table, they never arrived at any intimacy with their fellow pensionnaires. We used to think that the youngest girl would sometimes look longingly from her window at the merry groups in the garden below, but I suppose it was not thought etiquette to let her join them.

And now they have sauntered rather than walked out of my sight, and I see in the distance, coming at a brisk pace down the steep incline, two sisters who had started out in the morning for a long expedition. They were a funny pair, those two, so totally unlike except in their love of walking, for much of which, at first sight, they appeared equally incapable.

The youngest of the two—though neither were in their first or second youth—was fat and round, with a good-humoured face, and plenty of colour. Sometimes we thought that the 'too, too solid flesh' must melt at last under the influence of the very severe exercise she gave it. But no! After a scrambling expedition over mountains, which we had only looked at as something quite beyond our powers, with a broiling sun overhead, she would return as plump as ever. Her sister was slight and spare, a fragile, delicate creature, with a nervous manner, and a constant irritation in her throat, which caused a little cough most irritating to her hearers.

Some person, with more truth than politeness, had called them porpoise and shrimp; and the names stuck to them, as nicknames often will, though we were in terror of their discovering it.

Two or three ladies with sketch-books

and camp-stools were the next who passed by, and I joined them.

On our return to our little wooden residence we found that a fresh family were arriving. The large bell had just been rung to summon the master of the house, whilst it summoned no less surely the idle and curious members of our community to have a look at the new comers.

They were only three in number. The mother, an elderly lady, was seated in a little wooden chair, through which were run two poles for the purpose of carrying it. She had thrown back her hat, and displayed a good deal of rather untidy hair, grizzled, but whether from age or dust was difficult to determine, and a crimson face, sunburnt in a way which the sun of Switzerland seems to have a monopoly for doing in the shortest time.

She looked heated and tired, poor lady! and her bearers seemed equally so, perhaps with more reason. When our host came forward to ask what rooms were required, she was evidently perplexed, and turned to her eldest daughter, who was mounted on a tall, long steed, and so she put in her word, and explained in fluent Anglo-French the wants of the party.

Meanwhile the wooden steps had been brought forward and placed alongside of the horse, but the *decensus* proved anything but *facilis*, for the crinoline was hopelessly entangled round the pummela. It had stood out in every imaginable angle during all the day, and had caught more than once in the brambles, and now, to crown its misdeeds, there was no making it quit its present position.

What should we think if our fair *habitués* of Rotten Row took to riding in crinolines, and yet that would be hardly more ridiculous or inconvenient than the riding costume of our countrywomen in Switzerland. Few out of the hundreds one meets dares to resist public opinion so far as to appear in a modest and suitable dress.

No. 3 of the party, seated on a disreputable-looking pony, seemed to be taking a survey of the group on the balcony, which probably interested her more than the conversation upon the rooms, and whether they were to live in the house itself or in the 'dépendance.'

This same 'dépendance' was a great bugbear. It was situated at ten minutes' distance up a steep hill; and when there were no rooms to be had in the pension itself, the weary travellers had to trudge up to the 'dépendance.' Certainly there was a finer view, and

better air up there, and it was a good training for alpine walks, as we who had only to go up-stairs to bed told those who with cloaks and a lantern were preparing to ascend the hill, perhaps under pouring rain; but no one would have exchanged with them for all that.

At last everything was amicably settled. Our host, who had laden himself with various little packages, hand-bags, a travelling desk, and a strap of books, amongst which the inevitable 'Murray,' and 'The Practical Swiss Guide,' were conspicuous, led the way, followed by the three ladies, who looked stiff enough after the cramped position of the last few hours. The guides unstrapped the carpet bags and cloaks from behind the horses, and carried them up the wooden steps along the wide balcony-passage into the house, and then the poor beasts were led off to get the rest and refreshment which they had so well earned; and we, the curious ones, retired into our little sitting-room to make our remarks on the new comers.

A little before the hour for the evening meal, No. 3 made her appearance. A pretty, fresh-looking girl she was, with an abundance of soft brown hair, which hung loosely in a net behind her head. She appeared to think us rather a formidable party, for she gave a little start back on first entering, as if surprised to see so many people. Perhaps that was the reason she immediately turned her back on us all, and commenced rummaging over the books on the book-shelves. It was not a very entertaining library. Most of the books had been left behind by travellers, and tracts formed the staple commodity, with here and there one of the Tauchnitz Editions, or a stray volume of a French novel. I am afraid it was one of the latter that our little friend took to study as she seated herself at the window; but I do not think she could have gained much harm from it, for whenever I looked up I could see her eyes wandering from one person to another of those in the room.

In every community there is always some one person who takes the lead. We should have felt quite at a loss without our Queen Bee. She was a widow who had brought up a large family; and now that the sons had gone out into the world, and that the daughters were married, she found herself an active woman of middle age, without any definite occupation. So, like many before her, she took to travelling, and found a little pleasant society in the mountain 'pensions.' When she went on to a new one, there were always a

few people quite ready to go with her, because they were sure the place would feel quite dull when she had left.

It was so pleasant to have some one to take all the trouble of settling an expedition or a walk; who, when conversation grew stagnant, would be sure to have a pleasant topic to start, or else a new game, or something enlivening to propose; and then it was no small advantage to have some one who did not mind, perhaps on the whole rather enjoyed, doing battle with the landlord on the subject of any public grievance.

It was our widow who generally broke the ice with the fresh arrivals, and on this occasion it was not long before she had asked some trifling question, to draw the 'brown-eyed lassie' into conversation. The answer was given with a frank open smile; it was the unmistakable look of one who belonged to a family where there was nothing to be concealed. In the course of a quarter of an hour, without any effort on our side, we seemed to know all the family history.

How Caroline settled everything, and always paid the bills; and how the men would jog mamma in the 'chaise-a-porteur,' and made her get out at the steepest parts, because they complained she was too heavy. And there was a brother Charlie, too, who had voted 'pensions' votes, but had gone on an expedition to Chamouni. Our little friend wanted to go there with him, but Caroline did not think it was proper. Caroline was evidently a great authority in her family. So we chatted on, until the great bell rang for tea, and when all went together to the dining-room.

We called this meal 'tea' because of the beverage we drank, but it really amounted to dinner, what with the hot and cold meats, delicate little pancakes, and stewed fruit. But the best thing on the table was the whipped cream, large basins of it, thick, and foamy; we found it a wonderful improvement to the wild strawberries and raspberries. About this said cream I have something to relate. One day when it came to be tasted there was a general look of disgust; something had gone wrong, and there was a most decided flavour of oil. How it got there was never discovered. Our host vowed that the milk came direct from the 'vacherie,' and madame, with equal certainty, and still more volubility, declared that it had never come in contact with anything but the cleanest of basins and spoons. So we were fain to be content to hide our grimaces, and take refuge in silence. However, for some evenings

after, there was a decided reluctance to be the first to try the cream, and those who had the courage to taste it with the tip of their tongues were considered public benefactors, and their verdict was telegraphed round the table. But we never, fortunately, had a repetition of the oily flavour.

After tea came a little wandering in the garden, gazing up at the stars; and we watched the terrestrial star of red light from the cigar of our Russian prince as he paced up and down the gravel walk. But our host has carried the old-fashioned lamp into the little sitting-room, and it shines so attractively that one by one we gather round it. We do not muster our full force of an evening, for there are always some who retire to their own rooms, either to mend stockings or other wearing apparel, perhaps to write a letter, or else to doze away the evening pretending to read.

On entering I found that Caroline was trying the piano, a wretched old kettledrum, very much out of tune. Most now comers made an attempt at playing on it at first, but very soon got disgusted with its squeaking, groaning sounds; so our musical performances were limited to choruses without accompaniment, which we sang very often in the open air, on our walks. The style of music, I confess, was not classical—Christy-minstrel songs being the general favourites.

Before the evening was half over some of the younger ones proposed a game of cards, which was unanimously agreed to; so the table was cleared of books and work, the chairs were drawn round, and a pack of cards produced. We had five centimes, that is halfpenny, points, just to keep up the interest, not that there was not plenty of interest, and of laugh-

ing also, without that, and soon we were all deeply engaged in the mysteries of Chow Chow. Old Bachelor followed; but on account of the great preponderance of ladies we called it Old Maid; and just as we were in the most exciting part, ten o'clock, our breaking-up time, struck.

By eleven there was silence through all the wooden mansion, a silence which was not broken until the morning sunbeams found their way through the closed shutters, and woke us up to another day of innocent and harmless pleasures.

Far be it from me to encourage the idea that all 'pensions' are in this—shall I call it pastoral?—style. I speak only of those in the out-of-the-way parts in the valleys, or on the mountain sides. But go to Lucerne, or to Interlachen—that town of boarding-houses, or even to the borders of the Lake of Geneva, and there you may live as gay and fashionable a life as at any watering-place.

But the spirit of the mountains is not there. From amidst the heat and hurry, through the dust raised by the multitude of human footsteps, you will often be tempted to raise your eyes in imagination, with a longing glance, to those hidden peaceful retreats where nature can be met and enjoyed face to face.

Still, it is only during a few summer months that we can live in these high regions, for winter begins early so near the boundary of perpetual ice, and then comes the change. The snow lays its white carpet over the grass we loved to bask on; the cattle, with their tinkling bells, are driven down below; and the last visitor descends the rough mountain path, to find the summer still lingering in the valleys and round the lakes.

ALPHA.





## A SHY MAN'S DIFFICULTIES.



THE name that came with me into the world is Blusherly. The name which I received contemporaneously with the universal Christian rite was Charles Alfred. The three united, it will be perceived, run off euphoniouly as Charles Alfred Blusherly. For the last the law alone is accountable, which exacts that all children shall bear the name of their sires. The two former are to be set to the account of the then humour of my parents.

No doubt it will be assumed that here is some free, fearless, and even reckless nature—a wild, boisterous temperament, indiscreet it may be, but bold and eager, difficult to be restrained, and riding rough-shod over all obstacles. Ah, me! riding rough-shod, indeed! It were well if

it came to riding smooth-shod—or, indeed, riding at all. Am I not a shy man? and we shy men are brave enough upon paper. The gay rollicking key in which the overture to this piece is pitched, is no more than a poor sham, a hollow mockery, a sad make-believe. I am not free, nor rollicksome, nor frolicsome; I am miserably, hopelessly shy—consumed by that affection as by a disease.

In Dr. Goldsmith's play, Mr. Marlow, it will be recollected, in his interview with the barmaid, professed himself too coy to enter into any of the easy familiarities fashionable with gentlemen of his time. So acutely do I suffer from this horrid malady that, though well brought up and of severe morals, I am at times inclined to envy my less strait-laced and erring brethren in the practice of *such* easy familiarities at inns and other places. Repentant afterwards, I do for the moment admire the cool and smooth effrontery with which they can be affectionately rude to persons in that meaner order of life. I hope I shall not be misunderstood here, or thought to be sanctioning a course of practice highly free and reprehensible. I admire the power, but must at the same time turn away my eyes and condemn.

With me this weakness is, in a manner, constitutional; and betrays itself in mixed companies by violent flushings and conspicuous disorder and distress on being called, even unintentionally, into any notoriety—a sight, I am informed by friendly beholders, quite painful to those sitting or standing by. It must indeed be alarming for a large company pleasantly diverting itself harmlessly with light and indifferent topics, of a sudden to find a member of their society all blazing and flaming like an Italian sunset, and on the verge of strangulation from the sudden tightening of his necktie.

I feel that this phenomenon must naturally check the easy flow of conversation, and entail a needless publicity on the innocent. What I have suffered in this way, and the many times I have writhed in this agony, will not be known until the day of grand accounting—if, indeed there is to be a balance struck of *that* species of suffering.

Once there lived a maid, and the name of the maid was Blowzier—*Mary Blowzier*; of Huguenot extraction—so I was told—and living down on the Thames at Tomata Villa. My father had known *Mary Blowzier*—my aunt had been admitted to intermarry in the halls of *Blowzier père*; and had quaffed the cup of joy on festive occasions. It had been a pleasant speculation in the bosom of our family to lay out an alliance between the houses of *Blowzier* and *Blusherly*—to make me, the unconscious *Charles Alfred*, take her, *Mary Blowzier*, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, &c., according to the formula. They even went further, and, by a bold poetic license, would raise up heirs male of the body for the combined house of *Blusherly-Blowzier*, and carve out for them prematurely other distinguished alliances. It was agreed, however, that when *Charles Alfred* came home, he should be forthwith equipped handsomely, like the young Gascons in *M. Dumas'* tales, setting out for Paris; and, dismissed with my father's blessing, should make, not for Paris, but for *Tomata Villa* on the Thames. Alone I was to do it. Alone I was to win the prize gloriously—alone I was to fail.

It was a lovely summer day when I set forth. The sun was high in the heavens, and I glistened in its rays in a suit of bright new raiment. I was at the station at twelve o'clock of this summer's day, waiting for the train, which set forth at half-past twelve precisely; and yet, bright and encouraging as was the day—though, without undue exaggeration of phrase, all nature might be said to be smiling—I, *Blusherly*, the subject of this memoir, was in a horrible state of mind—literally, *sans phrase*, in a horrible state of

mind. I have sat at a species of public entertainment where an electro-biological operator has drawn all eyes upon me, and made me feel faint and giddy by an invitation to walk up on the platform. Yet this was worse. I have waited in the dentist's parlour; I have present to my mind the moment when the door is thrown gently open, and the dentist's menial announces, that by special favour he will let me be tortured first. Yet this was worse. Presenting myself on a platform to a derisive populace, or being led away to region of pincers and screws and levers and files, and cotton, and perforated delph, are horrible positions for a human being; yet not so horrible as plunging without support, moral or physical, into the bosom of a strange family. I was about to plunge without support into the bosom of a strange family. I had passed a fearful night—full of nightmares, startings, and convulsive tremors; but to my story.

I carefully selected a carriage that was a perfect void, and likely to remain a void. I love privacy in these railway journeys. And the better to secure the carriage I had selected continuing a void, I artfully walked up and down the platform *without* taking my place, but keeping my eye carefully upon it. Let me not be misunderstood; nor let any prevarication be suspected here. I *had* taken my place, so far as securing it by a deposit of an umbrella may be said to amount to the taking of a place. No one came. The bell sounded; and with feelings of secret satisfaction I *mounted*, as the French say, and sat down secure in a first-class solitude.

Suddenly I heard a shuffle and pattering as of feet; and a flock of scared ladies, with some gentlemen, flew past the window laughing and simpering, and indeed all but late. They were seeking places, and could find none, and passed again amid the impatient and stimulating cries of porters and guards, infuriated by the delay. A miserable dependent of the establishment thrusting his coarse face in at my window, sees that there is room; and throwing open the door puts the whole party

—three ladies and two gentlemen—that is to say, three enormous masses of inflated summer muslins, rustling and fluttering, and filling up the whole carriage—an unpardonable, an unwarrantable intrusion, which filled me with confusion and alarm.

The situation was really serious. I was alone, and thus really imprisoned with these strangers, who were clearly of a lawless, wanton temperament—the ladies specially—and would respect nothing, either human or divine. I saw that at a glance; and if there be a thing of which I stand in awe in this whole world, it is a female of a lively and scoffing temperament. Here were three females of lively and scoffing temperament—three females in boisterous and unfeminine spirits, hounded on, if I may so phrase it, by the applause of their two servile male companions. In an instant I saw that I was at their mercy, and that when there came a dearth of subjects on which to spend their powers of ridicule, I should be the next victim selected.

We flew along through the green fields, with the sun still shining placidly; and still the unseemly merriment went forward. I had purchased a bright yellow volume of 'Railway Reading,' with which I affected to be wholly absorbed; but which to this moment, if duly empanelled on oath, I could not name the title. It was a wretched blind; and by its agency I heard all their talk—such sarcasm, such scourging from one damsel specially of robust health and really fair to look on, and who kept the rest in convulsions of obsequious laughter. Suddenly, in answer to a sort of mock-modest self-disparagement on the part of one of the male listeners, the young lady of robust health said, gaily—

'Come, Captain Mannerly, no one ever accused *you* of being shy!'

'Well, I am now,' *pon* word, am. No one believe it, though; but am doosid shy.'

'Particularly with ladies,' said the young lady in robust health; a sentiment endorsed with a roar of laughter in chorus that was positively unseemly. 'I have a great

piece of fun coming,' said the young lady in robust health; 'there is a shy creature to be sent down to see me some time this week, so I am told. A man—only think!—a real shy man! Ha, ha!'

*Indecent Chorus.*—'Ha, ha, ha!'

'They tell me,' the young lady in robust health went on, 'that he was actually *born* shy! ha, ha! just as you see infants born with strawberry marks—and that he blushed in his cradle. Ha, ha!'

*Indecent Chorus* (as before).—'Ha, ha, ha!'

'I am dying to see the wretch,' she went on. 'We shall have a great day's sport. I shall draw him out, you may be sure.'

'Public admitted?' Captain Mannerly asked, 'aw?'

'Yes—must admit a select circle, you know. I should so like to see you *roast* him!'

'The poor wretch! how we shall tar and feather—but no, I don't think I shall let you in. You will laugh and disgrace me,' said the young lady in robust health.

Here followed chorus, indecent as before—'No, no! 'deed we won't! Come, you must; such fun,' &c.

'And the creature's name?' said another of the young ladies; 'what is it called? where was it found? who found it?'

'I have all particulars,' said the young lady in robust health; 'Blush-erly or Blushington, or Blushman, or some such title.'

'Haw, haw!' again roared the dragoon. 'Good heavens! Now—now promise me you won't let them send it to you without letting me know. Promise me, now—do!'

'Shall we have a large double magnifying glass, and look at the thing by turns? Ha, ha!' (This came from another of these charitable young persons.)

For myself—all this while I was growing ill. I was becoming sick to death. My forehead had broken out into cold dew. At every fresh coarse insinuation I could feel rushes of blood making straight for my ears. My cheeks were bathed in blood. My forehead was bathed in—no matter, let it pass. But still I read on—read on desperately, and

never lifted my eyes for one second. I wonder did the unfeeling crew take note of my flaming ear-tips glowing like hot embers. In the dark they would have looked fiery, like the ends of lighted cigars. These were my sufferings at that terrible moment.

The natural impulse would have been to have, as it were, taken the bull by the horns at the outset, and boldly proclaimed my style and titles, when it was to be seen that the tendency of the conversation was about to be personal and disparaging. But unhappily I was a shy man. Another pardonable impulse would have been, when the conversation had pronounced itself as decidedly personal and disparaging, not to have taken the bull by the horns—which kine was not present—but to have taken the insolent dragon by the throat, who actually *was* present. But here again I was a shy man. The act of throwing off my disguise, in a Rhoderick Dhu fashion, before such a company, would have killed me.

Presently, to my unspeakable relief, the young lady in robust health diverted the conversation into another channel, making sport of some other wretched victim, and I began to breathe again. After all, it was a trial, a heavy blow and deep discouragement; but still it might have been worse. I was an unknown quantity, a bird of passage whom they should never see again. As for *her*—no matter; there was a train at one thirty-five, ten minutes after the arrival of our own, and by that should I return. Here was a station now which would possibly relieve me of the whole party. At least, I could change carriages; find a place in a more sanitary neighbourhood; but again, I was a shy man, and should have to pass between two rows to reach the door.

As the train was stopping, I saw relief at hand in the shape of my friend Whilkers' familiar head gliding by, looking out for some object. I was glad to see Whilkers' familiar head: among these wild social Otaheiteans it would be some protection. The familiar face had seen me too, for I saw it moving to keep

up with the carriage. Here it was, now looking in at the carriage window, and interchanging hearty salutation with—the young person in robust health! I had not been seen.

'Good gracious me,' said the young person in robust health, 'are you coming in, Mr. Whilkers?—lots of room.'

'Was just going down to pay you a visit,' said Whilkers, entering. 'Hallo!' he added, seeing me then first, 'are you there? How d'ye do, old fellow?'

Though thus publicly addressed, I was not very much thrown out. The shocks of the last few minutes had hardened me to anything. Neither did I see, through some obtuseness (*quem Deus, &c.*), the terrible precipice on which I was standing. So I said to Whilkers that I was quite well, thank him, and fell back into my railway volume. But by-and-by it came. Whilkers is a man of what are called easy manners. He can talk without any grist, and can bake without flour, and only barn. And so, busy with our mutual friend Billington's coming marriage, he appealed to me for the young lady's name whom Billington was about to wed.

'Who is it, eh, *BLUSHERLY*? You should know.'

There was much confusion, as may be well imagined. The guilty beings round me were disordered in their turn. I saw them interchange glances of shame, and possibly contrition; all save, indeed, that abandoned young person in robust health, who had got her handkerchief to her mouth, I am afraid, struggling with suppressed laughter. For myself, I was strangely calm; and, for a shy man, wonderfully self-possessed. But it was the calmness of despair. No doubt my heart, and those significant bursts of blood to the cheeks and extremities of the ears—but I was very calm, on the whole.

My friend Whilkers, on this sudden pause and confusion, looked from one to the other in amazement. He could not comprehend the blank, the consternation that had fallen on the company. He saw them look-



See the story.

# A BOY MAN'S DIFFICULTY

Drawn by C. A. T. 1891







Drawn by C. A. Doyle.

A SHY MAN'S DIFFICULTIES.

[See the Story.]



ing at me doubtless with some strange expression, for he said, 'By the way, I had forgot. I thought you knew each other. Let me introduce my friend Blusherly. I believe,' adds Whilkers, knowingly, 'my friend Blusherly meant to contrive this acquaintance for himself some day this week, and perhaps I have spoiled his pleasure.'

More confusion; the young person of robust health suffocating with laughter—I again crimsoning with shame. As I think of the heartless jests that will follow, at my expense, my heart sinks; I know not where to look; I am ashamed to lift my head; I am hot, from my toes upwards—raging white heat. My friend Whilkers, from sheer puzzle, has become silent. We are all silent.

A station, a lonely station, where no one was to get out or get in—a blessed relief and deliverance. Though a shy man, I got up to descend.

'Why on earth do you get out here?' said Whilkers; 'who can you want to see here?'

With a ghastly smile I murmured something about friends waiting, and tore myself from his clutch, somewhat rudely, I must confess. The next instant I was on the ground—free. I saw them all straining to look after me, in undisguised bursts of vulgar merriment. Low creatures! I was free. But I had to wait until the evening, and saw train after train go by; for this was a lonely, unfrequented station, with but small traffic. I shall not soon forget that day of suffering. Why is it that fate heaps these trials on natures the worst calculated in the world to bear them?

## II.

Yet another scene from these tribulations of a shy man. One feature in the inevitable destiny of shy men has been already noted—that they are, as it were, specially marked out for suffering and social degradation. The observing student of life and manners cannot fail to have taken notice of this phenomenon: how the ordinary, being distinguished in no respect for brilliancy

of parts or intellect—nay, rather positively deficient in these qualities—seem to flounder heavily through life, with perfect antisatisfaction, and without attracting any painful notoriety; how the brazen and the foolish are happily exempted from all social pitfalls and *cul de sacs*, or who, if they do chance to stumble into such, do so without any glaring conspicuousness, and are assisted out humanely. But if the shy man should unhappily trip, the whole world looks round, and shrieks with amusement, relishing it as a trifle. An indifferent little accident, harmless in another, becomes in him food for inextinguishable laughter. We may go further, and say, that such casualties do somehow perversely fall only on the heads of shy men. A mysterious law seems somehow to nicely direct misfortune in that one direction. This phenomenon, illustrative of a too partial distribution of the casualties of life, as well as of the uncharitableness of our common nature, cannot have escaped the observant mind.

When, too, the shy man, driven to desperation, would make an effort, and cast away this burden which weighs him down, and triumphing over this fatal curse would stand forward on equal terms with his fellow men, it seems to be another fatal law of his destiny that this praiseworthy effort should only bring him worse confusion. Either his poor pretence is at once seen through, and he is dealt with summarily, as a shy man in a brazen man's clothing, which may be indeed but a just retribution; or else he plays his part so clumsily that he is detected forthwith. For a shy man, *quâd* shy man, there may be some merciful consideration, considering that he is what he is, and cannot help so being; but for a shy man, who is not only shy man, but impostor also, there can be no extenuation.

A second short apologue, drawn from my own experience, may be of use in illustrating the sorrows to which this unhappy class is subject.

Once we were living at the aquatic suburb of Richmond, and the tone of that neighbourhood being emi-

nently tranquil—tame, slow, stupid, were the phrases that rough spirits of the outer world applied to it—I somehow found myself becoming more reconciled to human nature. It was a sort of pastoral country, and the community in which I moved were more or less leavened with pastoral feelings; and though I believe I was really the only shy—retiring, I should say—man in the place, still no one rudely made sport of my infirmity: nay, I received such soothing treatment, such hopeful encouragement, that really I began to grow bold and assured, and even forward; and at last began to speculate whether it might not have been, after all, a sort of delusion—that I had been standing all this while in my own light, as it were; and to consider whether I was not by nature a rather forward, pushing, impudent person. I found myself, to my perfect amazement, talking loudly in a crowded room, and taking little pardonable liberties, justified by the laws of the drawing-room. It is but fair, at the same time, to add, that I was about the only available male person in the district, available, that is, for practicable social uses: and it should be mentioned, that the female pastures over which I strayed were of a serious semi-theological tone. This may account for that curious change I found in myself about this time.

All would have gone well but for the advent, early in the summer, of a strange, irregular family, with whom we had some London acquaintance, and who had come down for health and the aquatics—a proceeding rational indeed so far, and not to be objected to on serious grounds. It is lawful to seek health in conjunction with the aquatics, without let or impediment, and yet this apparently innocuous movement was fraught with fatal consequences to me. When I heard that the Shakerlys—mother, daughter Julia, and two roaring, noisy sons, Horace and John—were coming, I felt a cold presentiment, as of coming misfortune, creep slowly over me. And when people stopped me in the open highways, with the glad tidings that 'the Shakerlys had come'

(poor thoughtful souls! why should *they* be glad?), I gave a ghastly smile, and staggered under the blow. Some little time I had hoped for to be ready for the stroke, but I was scarcely prepared for this so soon. No matter: and as I walked up the hill to take one more look at that famous Thames view (I was almost adding, for the last time, but I did not meditate suicide), the horrid thought filled me that I was being strangely altered as I walked, and that, by a mysterious change, I was becoming a shy man again!

The mother of the Shakerlys was a London mother—a mother of parties, of routs, the common mother of all young men—like our bounteous mother earth; in short, the traditional fashionable parent. The Shakerly youths, Horace and John, were rude, noisy, blatant, coarse-minded fellows—persons that said what they thought, and did what they pleased; in short (I hope I shall be pardoned the expression), perfect *beasts*. I know this word to be coarse, but it is an exact description. Beasts they were. They had loud laughs, revolting cachinnations that jarred on you and made you start. They said what they called good things, and were always busy with an entertainment they called chaffing. From the moment they came I felt that in figurative, though scarcely accurate language, the peace of the valley was fled; Richmond, not strictly speaking, lying in a valley.

I never met such coarse minds, such rude unmitigated fashion of calling a spade a spade—such freedom of manners, such daily outraging of the ordinary decencies of society. And yet these men, Horace and John, were popular—absolutely popular. People were glad to have them at their houses, and encouraged them in their odious tricks. At times, indeed, I could envy them—envy them, with all their faults! As it was, they shoved me from my little throne, when the usual portion of fallen royalty, utter neglect, became my portion. But I did not complain; and would have looked on without repining, bearing my disgrace with the dignity which

makes adversity respectable, had I not begun to mark with feelings of alarm, that these odious men were beginning to turn their looks in my direction. They had exhausted all the facetious matter of the district, and began to cast hungry eyes upon me.

One fatal night the Shakerlys gave a party, and on that fatal night to their party did I repair. All through the day curious forebodings whispered that it would be better to stay away; but some horrid fascination drew me on to the edge of the precipice. Nay, at one time it had actually been arranged that I should go into London for the night, on special business; but towards four o'clock, by some mysterious interposition, it was put off until another day; and there was now no excuse for not going to the Shakerly saturnalia. In this I clearly recognised the hand of destiny, and ceased any longer to struggle with my fate.

It came. I entered the chamber, and as I stepped across the threshold, felt a *frisson* of horror. It was one of those licentious scenes of riot and revelry which but too often disgraced this Shakerly mansion, and which, under the thin disguise of 'small plays' as they are called, gave occasion for revolting displays of animal spirits. Here cotillions, and such 'satyric' dances raged, far prolonged into the night, and I used to blush to see young virgins of known virtue and good reputation bursting with hysterical laughter, and actually romping—plainly, unmistakably romping—running round with hands, 'threading the needle' as it was called, in company with fauns and satyrs. These two youths had literally demoralized the country, once the seat of innocence and virtue.

When I entered the carnival was at its height. Miss Julia Shakerly—a terrible young person, that would take the grand llama by his beard without hesitation—I always stood in especial awe of. I shrank from her. To-night she was the soul of the revel. I heard her voice rise above them all. She was laying out the order of the sports and pastimes of

the night, surrounded by a ring of noisy satyrs in tail-coats. I cannot recal having ever seen so unfeminine a spectacle. Ah! woe is me that I ever entered that dreadful place!

I would have no share in their profane rites. They had but asked me with a monstrous mendacity—a cloak for what was to follow—'to take a cup of tea.' Miserable pretence! which I should have seen through. I got no tea. There was not even the poor sham of cups and saucers. I sank into a corner and attached myself to a safe and serious dowager of goodly proportions, and with her bewailed the decay of good manners and morals, which is one of the features of our remarkable age.

I was busy in this pleasing intercourse, when I could not but take notice that many eyes were being bent upon me in a peculiarly significant manner, accompanied with a certain secret tittering. I blushed and grew warm, as I always do at any undue amount of notice; and grew warmer still when I saw that damsel, Miss Julia—whom I never yet saw grow warm or pink—coming towards my retreat, supported by one of her odious relations. What fell purpose could they have in view? Alas! I should know presently.

Strange, she spoke in very sweet and limpid accents. 'Mr. Blush-erly,' she said, demurely, 'we are about to play "The Seat of Mahomet," a new game just come out, and very fashionable, and you must join.'

Behind her came a sort of deputation of wild, disorderly satyrs, who respected neither age nor sex. What could this betide? and yet she was so soft and gentle!

In faltering accents, I murmured, 'that I did not know the principles that regulated the Seat of Mahomet, and that I could never hope to learn them—and that—that—' Here seeing everybody listening and smiling, I felt much agitated and could not finish. It was a horrible state of publicity.

'You must play,' she went on; 'I am queen here, and I order you. I shall teach you myself. Come!'

Here two forward satyrs insolently took me by the arms, and led me into the middle to where a chair, known, for the purpose of the game, as the Seat of Mahomet, was placed. I felt horribly during this degradation. I did not know how to behave, but took refuge in what I fear must have been neither more nor less than an inane grin. Unresisting, and utterly enfeebled in

mind and body, I was placed in the chair which was known as the Seat of Mahomet, and the conspirators gathered round in a circle. At that moment I saw distinctly, as in a magic mirror, all the horrors that were to come, and yet felt helpless as a child.

The principle of Mahomet's Seat was then briefly explained by one of the young Indians there present.



It seems it was actually invented by Miss Julia Shakerly herself as a sort of scientific exercise, and was considered a highly ingenious thing. It was held to be very instructive and improving as a physiognomical training, and was played somewhat in this wise—

I was placed on Mahomet's chair, as just mentioned (why the pro-

phet was selected was not made plain). Miss Julia stood beside me, and, I was told, bore the temporary designation of the Priestess. For this arbitrary appellation no reason was given either. All the populace were then gathered into a crowd at one end of the room (and a very disorderly crowd they were), all giggling, laughing, and obstrepe-



rously noisy. A horrid feeling began to take possession of me, that the whole was a deep-laid scheme, against me especially. But I sat on, smiling spasmodically.

It began. The rite was something in this wise:—One by one the company were led up, under the guidance of the Priestess, and placed before me: beginning with the youth Horace. Insolently he pryed and peered into my face—even taking hold of the more prominent features; and when I faintly deprecated this familiarity, and made as though I would rise, I was pushed back with indignity into my seat, and told 'it was the game.' Having surveyed me thus attentively, he whispered something in the Priestess' ear, which was received with an explosion of merriment and forthwith written down on a piece of paper. I could well imagine it was some disparaging criticism. Then came another, then another—all apparently, from the gradually intensifying merriment, growing more and more personal. And so the horrid torture went on until all had finished. Then Miss Julia proceeded to read out what she called my 'Phrenological development,' collected from the various opinions. What I went through during this portion of the ceremony will never be effaced from my mind. I wonder my hair did not turn white that night: as it was, beads of dew stood upon my forehead.

Priestess reads:—

'Phrenological development of C. Blusherly, Esq.

1. 'An out-and-out muff.'
2. 'A very mild youth.'
3. 'No brains.'
4. 'Reared on asses' milk.'
5. 'Would not harm a fly.'
6. 'Tame as a cat.'
7. 'Very soft indeed.'
8. 'Not to be trusted without a keeper.'
9. 'Fond of nurse.'

During the recital of these personalities, each of which was received with a scream of delight, I thought I should have died. I still continued to grin a ghastly smile, and when she had done, rose with

the secret purpose of rushing wildly at the door. But rude hands caught me by the shoulders and forced me back again, assuring me that 'the game was not half over yet.'

'Dear me, no, Mr. Blusherly,' the Priestess said, suffocating with laughter (six months in an asylum or house of correction would have done her a world of good), 'the fun is all to come as yet.'

This was the fun that came.

'Now,' said she, 'I am to ask you some questions, and you are to answer. That is the rule of the game. You are on your trial. I am the judge, and here is the jury.'

I to answer questions! more tribulation heaped on this wretched head!

'Now,' she went on, reading out, 'I find that some wicked person has said that you are "an out-and-out muff." Do you admit or deny the charge?'

With a feeble smile I murmured something mechanically to the effect of 'of course not.'

'A voice from the crowd called out rudely, 'Speak up!'

'Of course not,' she said; 'we all know that; ha, ha! Well, as you say Not Guilty, you must prove your case. How do you show you are not an "out-and-out muff"?'

This was the fun alluded to. I was badgered, cross-examined, insulted, trod upon, bruised (morally, of course), until in about three quarters of an hour's time I was all but ripe for an asylum. I was made to show that I had not 'been reared on asses' milk,' in the 'words of my plea,' as a young barrister of the company put it. My head was felt over, to see if it was a conformation indicative of brains. And finally the case was sent to the jury, and a verdict taken—which was to the effect that I had not 'made out my plea.' I was too agitated at the time to notice that ingenious perversion of legal practice which threw the burden of proof on me. But let that pass. I proved nothing—attempted nothing—did nothing. Several times I was on the verge of fainting. Finally, when they had exhausted all the arts that their

malice could suggest, I was set free—more from weariness in their game than from any feeling of compassion for their victim. I fled from the house, and arrived at the paternal mansion quite wild and dazed, and slightly bordering on the verge of idiocy. They told me I spoke incoherently on questions being put to me. From that hour I remained a hopeless, incurable shy man.

### III.

I have yet a third experience. An interval of years is supposed to have elapsed between this act and the last. Some years had passed over my head, and brought with them, possibly, wisdom and additional shyness. I was a wiser and a better—and a shyer—man. The scene, too, is changed to a retired watering-place, slightly decadent, and growing unfashionable, and not likely to be visited by the rude blasts of rail-lery and what is vulgarly called 'chaff'—a sequestered vale, as it were, tinged with tea and seriousness. I was comparatively happy there. I was treated gently and considerably; and the shrinking and retiring nature with which I had been endowed was not likely to be exposed to those cruel tests which had really shattered the whole system, and made me subject to fits of timidity like fits of epilepsy. It was stupid, yet healthful; it was dull, yet decent and sober.

So it continued until that fate or destiny, which is peculiarly hostile to shy men, brought into the neighbourhood a wandering showman, who took the Rooms, and placarded the dead walls copiously with his announcements. When I say a showman, I mean he was an electrobiologist—a gentleman who lectured on that science, and 'illustrated it with living examples.' It was proposed that the aristocracy of the place should patronize the show; but with a strange instinct in these matters, which never deceives me, I hung back. I was suspicious of those words 'living examples,' which in themselves contained a warning. But I was seduced into going. There was a charming girl mixed up in the

business (a charming girl whom I fancied was about eventually to become Mrs. Blusherly; but that is a separate history, and neither here nor there—*there*, if either of the two); and the charming girl was anxious I should attend on her (of course in the society of her parent) to the scene of entertainment. I begin to suspect now that the charming girl had no other escort; but that, too, is neither here nor there.

In the evening we repaired to the entertainment—the charming girl, her mamma, and I. The Rooms were full, and on going in, the gentleman who gave the tickets gave us also vouchers and numbers, bidding us take great care of the same. The object of this arrangement was, handsomely to give us all a chance of some 'valuable prizes,' which, as the bills informed us, were to be given away that night. We accordingly took care of our numbers and vouchers, and those of the charming girl and her mamma were given to me to keep.

The operator made his appearance, gave the usual prefatory remarks, and finally begged that a number of gentlemen would 'favour him' by stepping up on the platform. Some half a dozen were with difficulty wheedled up from their places and arranged in constrained attitudes on chairs. Still there were scarcely sufficient, and the operator looked wistfully round for more. I saw his eye settle with a longing expression on me. I could imagine that he thought my peculiar organization admirably adapted for his nefarious ends; and at the bare notion I felt my face glowing and flushing in a raging spasmodic fashion. Gracious! he was speaking—actually addressing me—pointedly, individually, before the whole company!

'Will you, sir? Would you favour me, sir—oblige the audience? would you step up?'

In a drawing-room—in the open air—it is well enough, or rather ill enough; I can endure it. But being thus interpellated before the public! My tongue clove to my mouth. I could not answer, and took refuge in a dogged silence. The charming

girl looked at me wondering. *Now*, I believe she was anxious I should exhibit myself in this ridiculous light. It seems to me that every one wishes me to furnish them with food for laughter. But let that pass.

I remained stolidly immovable, insensible. Possibly the operator thought me deaf. I never answered him or appeared to hear him. There was wisdom after all in this foolishness. He desisted at last, and I was left in peace.

He began his tricks—his incantations, I mean. The half a dozen men were set to work at to stare at small zinc discs, and at the end of a suitable time five were discovered to be in exactly the same condition as at starting, and were 'cast' as unfit for the service. Remained only one who showed symptoms of somnolency, admirably pronounced. Him I suspect to have been a salaried 'living example;' but let that pass too. He did the usual surprising feats—danced, sang, played, made speeches, got drunk, got angry, squared at his employer—I mean the operator, and exhibited the regulation surprise when brought back to the ordinary world, on his emp—the operator saying it was 'all right.' Then came the 'giving away' of the 'prizes.'

There were clocks, jars, a stray silver watch or two, and a profusion of doubtful guard-chains. The numbers were drawn in a sort of lottery; and I felt a little excited as I thought of the possibility of a winning number being mine, when suddenly, on a successful one being proclaimed, I saw the holder rise from his seat, and amid applause walk up a long lane to receive his prize, with every eye turned on him in envy or admiration. This frightful ordeal I never could endure—never, never; and I actually trembled in my seat as I thought of the bare possibility—the horrible piece of luck—of a prize falling to me.

Happily all passed by; all were nearly drawn, save a really pretty French pendule, purposely kept for the last, as the most valuable. He drew out the number. I scarcely breathed.

'Five hundred and sixty.'

Not mine, thank heaven! I was safe. But there was a little scream of delight beside me.

'My number!' said the charming girl. 'My number; do you hear? How delightful! how nice! Where is it? quick! Go up and get it.'

'Any claimant for number five hundred and sixty?' said the operator, looking round.

'Quick!' said the charming girl, 'go up for it; he is waiting.'

Go up for it, with all those eyes bent on me—not for millions. It was not a question of mere will, the power was wanting. I *could* not have stirred. I smiled, I am afraid feebly.

'When did you hear from your sister?' I said, attempting to give a turn to the conversation.

'If no one claims this beautiful article,' said the operator, 'we must pass it, and keep it for another night.'

'Do you hear?' said the charming girl, very impatiently; 'go up, *do*. I shall lose my clock. Where is the number?'

'Where?' I said, wildly. Ah, blessed thought! 'I am afraid,' I continued, feeling my pockets, 'that I have—really—I am afraid it is lost. Are you sure you gave it to me?'

The charming girl *looked* at me. I think she could not trust herself to speak; and the parent of the charming girl murmured something that in the distance had a sound akin to 'stupid.'

'Then,' said the operator, 'there being no claimant for this beautiful and truly chaste article, it shall be reserved for the next evening, when we hope, ladies and gentlemen, to have the pleasure,' &c.

'Yes,' said I, still feeling my pockets, 'I am really afraid I have lost it.'

The charming girl said not a word. Whether I had or had not lost the number matters not now; but at that time something else was lost too—the charming girl herself, who ever after could scarcely speak to me with civility.

And so to this day I remain a shy man—indeed, I may say, the shyest of shy men.

P. F.

## HOPE !

COME to the woods with me, love,  
 Come where the sweet birds sing;  
 Come to the woods with me, love,  
 And watch the wild flowers spring.  
 What though our hearts be sorrowful,  
 The care shall pass away:  
 The darkest hour of night, love,  
 Is that before the day.

Why shouldst thou weep to see, love,  
 That all bright things must fade?  
 Think how, when autumn's glorious tints  
 Deck forth the forest glade,  
 It is fairer than e'en in the joyous spring,  
 Or the noon of the summer's day.  
 Ah, wherefore should we weep, to think  
 Youth's dreams must pass away!

And when dark winter's storms, love,  
 Shall sweep the forest bare,  
 Ere the last leaf can leave the stem,  
 Fresh leaves are budding there:  
 So, in the sorely stricken heart,  
 Whilst cherished hopes decay,  
 New hopes are springing forth to life,  
 Ere those have passed away.

List to that mystic harp, love,  
 The wild winds make their own;  
 Still to the voice of the passing breeze  
 It yields an answering tone:  
 Hark! as the wailing notes  
 So sadly fall—to die!  
 The thrilling strings pour forth again  
 Still sweeter harmony!

Come to the woods with me, love;  
 Come with a spirit light:  
 Hear the rejoicing song of birds,  
 Gaze on the waters bright.  
 Let not your heart be sorrowful;  
 Drive grief and care away:  
 Think how the darkest, longest night  
 Is followed by the day!

L.

## AUTUMN IN THE CANADIAN WOODS.



SHOOTING in Canada is a very different affair from shooting at home. There are no preserves, and game is thinly scattered over an immense tract of country. Hence, although a man may occasionally get a good day's snipe, woodcock, or duck shooting, he can seldom get that certainty of a fair day's sport for a hard day's work that can generally be made sure of in England; so that if a sportsman finds himself quartered in Canada, after a grill in the West Indies, his best plan is to make an expedition to the woods, where the novelty of the life, the beauty of the scenery, and the size of the game, will more than make up for the fewer head that he brings home.

I had, like most men similarly situated, taken a turn after the moose in the winter, and now, in the autumn of 185-, I determined to try my luck when there was no snow on the ground. As there is no preserving, there are of course

no keepers, and a start for the woods involves something more than a mere order for keepers and dogs to be ready at nine the next morning.

First, there is the important consideration of who is to be your companion; and when you are to be thrown almost entirely upon each other for society for thirty days or more, it is nearly as bad as choosing a wife. None but a man who likes to rough it, and to meet difficulties for the pleasure of overcoming them, ought to go an inch beyond civilization. Don't take a selfish fellow, and don't take one who agrees to everything you say; there is at times monotonous enough without that. As you can't take books enough to read, take some one who has read a good deal, and remembers what he has read; you will often find a quiet, reading sort of fellow, with apparently no go in him at home, the best in the woods. Pick, in short, a companionable

man, and make up your minds, both of you, to give and take before you start. Having found your companion, you must next select your ground and your men. The former is generally consequent upon your choice of the latter, for few men could guide you equally well in different parts of the country. Indians are generally chosen, but in this case I engaged some Irish settlers, living 'convenient,' as they said, to our ground, and had no occasion to repent my choice. Next lay in your stock of provisions, and that requires some little care, let me tell you—it is a different affair from a paper of sandwiches and a flask of sherry. A hundredweight of captains' biscuits, half a hundredweight of salt pork, split peas, rice, sugar, tea and coffee, tobacco, salt, mustard and pepper; a bag of onions and one of flour, a keg of whiskey, powder and shot, axes and blankets, and a change of clothes, —these together will be a pretty good load for your party of four, we will say, yourselves and guides. These are the preliminaries which we will suppose I have settled satisfactorily to myself, and am now ready for a start to the head waters of the St. John's River, where it divides Canada from the States.

I had been casting about as to whom I should get as a companion, when it was settled for me by the arrival of an old friend, whose regiment was quartered at Jamaica, and who declared that a trip to the woods was the very thing to restore a digestion impaired, he feared irretrievably, by a tropical climate. I ought to say that there were plenty of congenial spirits in the gallant old corps, but it so happened that the races were coming off, and that our horse, 'Frazer,' was matched against an old antagonist, who, in fresh hands, was heavily backed to beat him the best three out of five mile heats, over the Quebec race-course, on the Plains of Abraham. I loved the woods more than the turf, and so, I was glad to find, did my friend Frank; and so leaving the racing men to keep up the credit of the corps, we started one fine afternoon for our destination.

'The Doctor' (so called because he once drove a doctor's carriage), now the leading livery-stable keeper and horse dealer at Quebec, and purveyor of horses to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and suite, during their late Canadian tour, supplied us with a good pair of horses and a stout waggon, into which we had some difficulty to pack all our provender, solves, and baggage, besides a lad to drive it back again. After safely steering our heavy load down Mountain Street on to the quay, and from the quay on board one of the steamers which ply between Quebec and Point Levi, and driving up the steep hill on that side, we reached the table land of the southern shore, and taking the route up the valley of the Etchemin, we drove merrily on, passing the comfortable homesteads of the most contented people in the world, the French Canadians; the pretty whitewashed cottages, backed by the deep green of the firs and the glorious scarlet and yellow of the sugar maple, now in all its pride of colour. The last loads of the harvest were being carried home, and all looked happy and joyous, as if they had indeed reason to be contented with their lot. On now through the pretty villages, where the churches with their tinned roofs reflected the deep crimson rays of the setting sun—the priest's house adjoining the church, and looking more polished, bright, and comfortable than any other, as I have no doubt it was, mon Père himself looking happy and gentlemanly, as the French Canadian priests usually are, and enjoying his pipe by the side of his hop-covered porch. On to our stopping-place at St. Claire, where we found a portly host ready to receive us. He looked like an English Boniface, but repudiated the idea of belonging to so circumscribed a nationality; he was, he told us in answer to our question of where he came from, not an Englishman, but a cosmopolite, or, as he was good enough to explain, 'a citizen of the world.' The usual meal of meat and tea, eggs and bacon, having rapidly disappeared, Frank's 'impaired digestion' having



apparently been roused from a state of torpor during a course of severe jolting for the last hour of our journey, we lighted our pipes, and tried to get our cosmopolitan landlord to be communicative over a glass of grog: his appearance, however, belied him, and we came to the conclusion that portliness is not always to be connected with laughter and good-humour. He was a shocking radical, and we thought it highly probable that our 'citizen of the world' was a bad style of Yankee, and so we turned in early to be ready for a good start next morning.

We bade our 'citizen' a willing good-bye, after lumpy beds and a bad breakfast, and were once more *en route* over the roads of which our last hour's drive had given us a specimen the evening before—and they got worse and worse instead of better—over the hills and through the swamps till after a six-hours' drive we got over some twenty-five miles, and arrived at Standon, our guide's village, and the last settlement on our line.

Here we found him busily engaged putting the canoe to rights, and hurrying over some of his farm work before making a start. We set to and gave him a hand, so that all was ready for the next morning. His log hut was a comfortable one, his wife a tidy woman, who produced her best, and made such excellent potato-cakes, that I entertained the most serious fears for Frank's impaired organs, from the quantity he would stow away. I suppose the purity of the atmosphere prevented their having any ill effects.

In the evening visitor after visitor dropped in, nominally to wish Rob (our guide) good-bye, really to have a look at us. They were all Irish, and stanch Orangemen; in fact, it was an Orange settlement, not at all inclined to liberal views, and quite under the impression that their neighbours over the way, who were highly papistical, would exterminate them all if they could. Late hours are not fashionable in these parts, so nine o'clock found us taking our last night between the sheets for some time to come.

Hearing Rob stirring early, we turned out, and finding a glorious spring close to the house, performed our ablutions, assisted by a sharp hoar frost, in a highly refreshing and invigorating manner. After packing the canoe on a cart, and our baggage into three bundles for carrying when the cart could go no further, we started for Lake Etchemin, along what was once intended for a road. It was just twelve miles off, and as there were no settlers' farms or anything, in fact, but forest on the way, we were surprised to find that a broad road and bridges over the streams had existed, but which were now broken down as to the bridges, and broken up as to the roads. All, however, was explained on reaching Lake Etchemin, where we found a handsome house with a good clearing round it, several boats on the lake, and an air of pretension contrasting strongly with the usual log hut. It appears that a certain commissary-general had pitched upon this place for his retirement, had built a good house, cut a road, and made bridges, either at his own or at government expense—which, dependent could not say, but opined the latter—and then found that it was rather too far away for comfort; that making morning calls and going to market at Quebec over sixty miles of roughish roads, was *un peu trop fort*, and that, however jolly woods and lakes and retirement were in theory, they were not all one wanted in practice; and so the house on Lake Etchemin was let off for next to nothing to a somewhat dirty Irishman, a very dirty wife, and some equally dirty children and pigs. However, they were kind and hospitable, and perhaps we should not wash and dress ourselves quite so often as we do now if we lived away in the woods, and did all the work ourselves.

This was as far as the cart could go, so we launched the canoe, and to our horror discovered she leaked! As we were to live in her, at least during the day, for the next month, this was a serious matter; but we had brought some rosin in case of accidents, and so we 'rosined the

bow,' and made her water-tight *pro tem*.

Alas! I had to do the like many a time after, to my sorrow.

All aboard we got, and paddled about three miles to the end of the lake: by this time it was getting dark, so we determined to settle for the night, as we found an old camp handy. It was made simply of two stout poles stuck in the ground with another across them, against which leaned some old planks, apparently brought from a saw-mill attached to the house on the lake. Fancy yourself in an attic cut down the middle, and you have an idea of the usual shelter or camp.

A quantity of young fir branches spread on the ground make a pleasant, fresh-smelling couch, over which to throw your blanket; there is wood in quantities for a roaring fire, then get out your camp-kettle and make tea. A couple of hard biscuits and a bit of fried pork seem delicious after a longish day's work—at least for one's first day. Our tea, without milk, is strong, sweet, and refreshing; then pipes out, smoke, and rolled up in our blankets, we go to sleep pretty soon after the sun goes to bed.

As soon as the sun found his way through the dense foliage of firs we were all astir for our first real day in the woods; as yet we had only been on our way to them. Making up our fire, we soon had some good tea, pork and biscuit, the same as for our dinner the evening before, and packing our loads commenced our journey. Robert carried the canoe, whilst Frank, John Home (our second guide), and I, each carried a bundle some eighty pounds in weight. This might be no great matter on a hard road, but in the woods, which were generally swampy, with here and there a fallen tree across our path, or a half-concealed rock or stump, it was not so easy. However, we jogged along as well as we could, halting every hour for a draw of the pipe, from eight till four, getting over some ten miles, when we were brought to a standstill by an apparently impassable mass of timber. It was what is called in Canada a windfall, or

the track of a tornado, in this instance about a quarter of a mile broad, and extending several miles on either side of our line. Every tree was levelled with the ground; from the giant pine on the hill-side to the tough tamarack of the swamp, none had been able to withstand the vast power in its onward path. All intertwined and interlaced they lay, absolutely forbidding the road. Rob, however, knew that a quarter of a mile further on ran a little stream, on the banks of which he proposed to camp for the night; so leaving our loads behind us, excepting a blanket each, and the camp-kettle, and something to eat, we set to work with the axes, and by cutting here and turning there, now under the stem of one prostrate giant, and again over the trunk of another, we managed, after a couple of hours' work, to get through this stockade of the Titans. Thoroughly tired we were when the murmur of the stream broke on our ears, and we came to the other side of the windfall. It left off as suddenly as it had begun; the Storm King had cut his path as clearly as a mower sweeps down the grass. Pulling a few branches of the fir, and spreading them on the ground, we were only too glad to dispense with the trouble of raising a shelter. There was plenty of 'good timber, and so with a fire at our feet, and a glorious deep-blue sky above our heads, our pipes and blankets encouraging the drowsy feeling, we dropped off hungrily to sleep; for after our hard day's work we had been obliged to be content with tea and biscuits for dinner, the pork being the other side of the windfall, and not get-at-able under a couple of hours' scramble. I suppose hunger and the morning cold roused us earlier than usual, for we found ourselves coaxing the embers into a blaze by daylight and were afoot soon after. Our first job was to bring the canoe, which took us all to manage, through the windfall; next our loads, and then we got some breakfast, packed up and crossed the stream, and finding the track somewhat firmer on the other side, pushed on and reached our

intended ground, the banks of the St. John, before noon. Here, to our surprise, we found another canoe drawn up, so some one was about, probably a lumberman in search of good timber for next winter. The river itself looked black and deep, running through beds of alders, on the tender shoots of which moose are fond of feeding. After repairing damages of the transit of fourteen miles to the canoe, properly called a 'portage,' we launched our craft, and found her tolerably tight. Now was her turn to carry us as we had carried her, so off we went to look for good camping ground. We found what we may call a mansion and a 'shooting-box' both at our disposal, the former tenants having 'gone to town for the season,' in other words, a deserted lumberman's log hut, and an Indian wigwam, the former grand, imposing, and dirty; the latter light, airy, and tolerably clean. It consisted of a number of poles ranged in a semicircle, the ends meeting at the top and the intervals filled up with bark from the birch-trees. On this we decided as long as the weather was fine, so leaving Home to make the camp tidy, unpack and get out some food, we started, under Rob's guidance, to look for a moose. Quietly launching the canoe, we pushed off, paddling gently down the river, which consisted of a series of great S's and little s's, round the bends of which we hoped quietly to steal upon our game. Nobody was to talk, and sneezing or coughing was strictly forbidden. Seated in the bow, all eyes and ears, what should I see before me, standing up to her shoulders in the river, cropping an alder bush, but a fine cow moose! Now for a shot! Visions of kidneys for dinner—after salt pork and biscuits for two days and a half—marrow bones and a steak, floated before me. I steadily aimed my gun and—missed my moose! 'Give her the other barrel,' shouts poor Frank, who can't fire because I am right in front of him, and jumping about in a bark canoe, or leaning three-eighths of an inch more to one side than the other, means duck and no

green peas for dinner; and so, hopelessly, despairingly, I let her have it as she scrambled up the bank on the other side, and yet the wretched victim got away! Poor Frank! what a look of disgust, pity, and contempt he gave me! but what were his feelings to mine? To miss an animal as big as a cow at sixty yards—oh! riflemen of England, what excuse could I offer? None; I simply grovelled abjectly under the withering scorn of my companions. The shot and the shout being sufficient to scare any moose within five miles, 'slowly and sadly' we paddled home to camp—against the stream this time, and for the third day had salt pork in anticipation. To add to my misery, Frank declared that the coats of his stomach could never stand such a diet, and that, like the Israelites of old, he longed for fresh meat. There was no butcher's shop within forty miles—a snow storm had come on—the wigwam was not watertight—and all that could be suggested was that they were very creditable circumstances to be jolly under; and that we ought, if possible, to emulate the virtues of Mark Tapley in this respect. So we set to work at once. The cook reported that with flour and lard and water he could make a pancake. This was cheering, and he was desired to lose no time in carrying out so noble an idea. Again he had made some soup with peas, rice, pork, and onions, which smelt savory; also the biscuits being toasted were crisp; and lastly, having made the camp, and put the soup on to boil, he had gone down to the river, and with a piece of pork for bait, had hooked a capital dish of trout! Carefully concealing the fact of having all these delicacies in store, he had led us on to growl, to give us a practical lesson upon contentment. When all these viands were disposed of, and washed down with good tea, we felt that, after all, the circumstances were not creditable enough for Mark Tapley. Then came the soothing pipe, and as we were enjoying it, 'there sounded a step through the foliage thick,' and the owner of the canoe we had found made his appearance.

He was, as we suspected, a lumberman who had come up from Fredericton in the fall of the previous year for pine, had built the log hut we came upon and two or three others down the river, and was going to sleep in the nearest one, wanting us to join him, as he was sure we should be badly off in the snow. However, we preferred cold and fresh air to the smell of the abandoned log hut, at all events till he had cleaned it out; and so after a glass of grog we parted, wishing him luck in his trip down to Fredericton, some 200 miles. He had a lad with him, and expected to do the distance in three days, and had been up arranging a lumbering party about the same ground for the coming season.

Up to this time the weather had been fine, but as a change was evidently threatening, we decided next morning upon cleansing and fumigating the old lumberman's hut, and making it our head-quarters. We soon cleared out everything of a fusty nature, and laying fresh fir branches, and lighting a good fire in the stove, we soon made the 'mansion' habitable.

The Indian summer, that beautiful time of the year, is generally preceded by rough weather, and we had unfortunately started just as it might be expected; so we made up our minds for a week at least of it. Fortunately it was not continuous; and though affording little prospect of finding moose in their favourite haunts, we were at no loss for amusement.

We were joined at the log hut by another hunter of rather a jealous turn, who would not go out except alone, having always some excuse ready to urge against company. Our companions knew him well enough, and had heard him speak of a lake with some beaver on it that he had discovered, and we suspected that his visits were to see if they had been touched. He had no traps with him, and therefore had not come to take them. If they were unmolested it would be easier for him to do it in winter.

One morning he had started with his canoe after we had gone out, and

returned late at night, saying he had hidden it, and was going to leave the woods early next morning, as the weather was too bad to stay; accordingly he started by daylight, so as to get over the thirty miles to the settlements in the day. We, being possessed of the bump of curiosity, determined to find out our friend Ned's beavers, if they existed; so after breakfast we made a cast round the camp, and came upon his trail where he had evidently passed with a canoe: the print in the soft moss was heavy, and twigs had been broken here and there by the canoe on his shoulder. Of course Uncas and Chingachgook, Le Rénard Subtil and Hawkeye presented themselves to our minds; and, in fact, we found that following a trail in the woods was much easier than tracking a thief in the clearings. Where no human foot had passed but that of the one we were in search of, the least print on the moss, scrape against a tree, or twig displaced or broken, was enough to guide even our inexperienced eyes—and how much more would they be to one trained to the habit?—so that we could believe now some of Cooper's tracking stories, which seemed before almost incredible. For four miles we carefully followed our traitorous friend's trail, found his canoe cunningly hidden, and, a few hundred yards further on, the lake. In the middle of the lake were two mounds of sticks and mud, looking exactly like the tops of a couple of haystacks in a flood: these were the beaver-lodges, and the end of the lake, where a small stream carried off its waters, was dammed to a sufficient height to insure enough water for these 'cute little creatures in the dry season.

After reading so many accounts of the beaver, its habits, and its gradual extinction in Canada, we considered ourselves most fortunate to have found a colony still in existence, and to see the timber as thick as a man's thigh cut by them as cleanly as with an axe to form their dam—itsself a large and solid structure.

It was, however, a cold, wet day—rainy and snowy, and no beaver

themselves were visible. We found plenty of 'sign,' and also moose tracks; but as the ground about the lake was low and swampy, we did not care to change from our camp. Returning, we shot one of the tree partridges common in Canada: it was a fine cock bird, sitting with his tail outspread, and looking like a turkey in miniature. As we had not any fresh meat except fish, as the Irishman said, he was quickly plucked and popped into the soup. The evening now gave promise of fair weather, which cheered us all up, as we were getting rather down in the mouth at our want of luck. Old Home got quite excited, and when the one cupful of grog allowed to each after supper had gone round, volunteered us a song on the battle of Waterloo. As it was rather long-winded I will only give the last verse, just to show we were in good loyal company:—

'Success to Queen Victoria!  
Long may she rule and reign;  
Likewise unto Duke Wellington,  
That noble son of Erin!  
Two years he added to our time,  
With pay and pension too;  
For ages long we shall be called  
The sons of Waterloo!'

The rhyme of 'reign' and 'Erin' requires an Irish tongue tipped with a drop of the 'cratur' to roll it out properly. However, it was successful, especially in sending Frank to sleep—either that or the supper, which his impaired digestion seemed to appreciate. The next morning, as was our custom, we went to the river side for a good wash: going carefully down the bank, slippery with the frost, my legs appear to have quarrelled with my body, and, sliding away from under me, I found myself sounding the depth of the St. John's River near its source, which, for the benefit of any F.R.G.S., I may as well state I found to be 4½ feet. It is rather a bore, with only one suit and a half of clothes in the woods, to get a regular ducking, as there is no kitchen fire to dry them. However, the morning was too fine to stop, so we trusted they would dry on, or, at all events, they would have a chance in the evening, and

we quickly started. The weather was glorious: not a ripple on the water; every branch, every twig, nay, every leaf, reflected as clearly as in a looking-glass, as we slowly paddled along. It was, however, rather too cold for moose: the frost had been a sharp one; and in one or two places we saw the track of moose down to the water's edge. One had tried a bath, but the ice at the edge had turned him, and again we returned mooseless. Frank, however, shot a mink, a small animal of the marten tribe, but inhabiting the banks of rivers, as it chiefly lives on fish. This was destined to be his only trophy, for he was obliged to leave next day for Quebec, taking old Home with him as guide, in order to be in time for the West India mail from New York. He kindly forgave me for missing the moose, and declared he had enjoyed himself in spite of bad sport, and that his organs were immensely benefited! I found, however, on my return that he had circulated a base fabrication—that the moose I had missed was only fifteen yards off. I attribute this to an over-indulgence in Mrs. Rob's potato-cakes, as he returned, bringing on his old complaint again. Left to ourselves, Rob and I agreed to change our ground; so, packing up our traps, we pulled some twenty miles down stream, seeing plenty of 'sign,' but no moose, and camped for the night in an old wigwam made of heavy split timber, which in the night came down by the run as we snored beneath, and made us imagine ourselves violently assaulted by the original owners. However, we both began to laugh at each other's astonishment as we sat rubbing ourselves amid the ruins; and taking the opportunity to freshen up the fire, rebuilt our camp, and slept peaceably till daylight.

*En route* again, and again no luck. There was no standing this. I should go back worse than empty-handed, with nothing to show or say except that I had missed the only chance I got. I grew desperate.

'We must do something, Rob. Suppose we start for Fredericton, and say we have been travelling, not

shooting; it's not two hundred miles from here, and the only bad place is the big Falls: what do you say?

'I'll go anywhere ye like, sir,' was Rob's ready response.

'Then pack up, and off, for we have only three days' grub left.' And off we soon were.

But 'l'homme propose, et Dieu dispose.' As we were running a bit of shallow water we struck a rock, and knocked a hole as big as my head in our bark canoe! She began to fill, and we had to jump out smartly into the rapid, and drag her ashore; fortunately it was not deep, and we got her up the bank without losing anything. Here we were, then, about forty miles down the river, with a hole in our gallant *bark* with which we saw at once it would be madness to attempt a wide and deep river, as the St. John's soon becomes, and just grub enough left to get us back to the clearings, if we worked hard up stream and over the 'portage,' in three days. There was no starvation in the case, of course, with trout in the river and partridges in the woods, but just enough chance about one's dinner to give you a keener appetite than usual.

The first thing was to mend the canoe. The pork sack furnished a stout, greasy bit of canvas, a strip of bark the string, and we soon tacked the patch over the hole. There were plenty of firs which gave us gum, and, mixing this with resin, we warmed it in the frying-pan, and, applying it over all, made a tolerable job—not exactly watertight (in fact, she could never boast of this), but pretty nearly so. Having accomplished our task, we produced the remains of the whisky and pork, fried half the latter, and, with a biscuit, made a capital lunch—I always found it a good thing to eat if I got a ducking—and then devoting a glass each to an earnest invocation to 'luck,' packed up, and again launched forth once more against the stream.

It was one of those lovely days of the Indian summer so often described, but never realized till seen, and then not fully appreciated unless in the woods. No breath of air

stirs the highest tree top or ruffles the tiniest wave. A crimson sun seems to peer through the deep blue haze; a stillness pervades all nature, such as in the tropics would forebode hurricane or earthquake, but here it is unaccompanied by the close, confined atmosphere which renders the beauty of the scene there so unenjoyable. Here the air is pure, refreshing, and invigorating; and yet, withal, the intense repose of nature seems to overcome you, and to woo you to a contemplation of her autumn charms, rather than to—

'Now, sir!—now, sir! Shoot! Bad luck to them, they're off!'

Fancy being aroused out of one's poetry by sounds like these! but I was, to behold, as we passed a sharp bend in the river, two moose, seduced by this very beauty I was almost dreaming of, to take a last bath for the season. Now my rifle, which was lying across my knees, had a compound patent safety dodge to prevent its going off by accident; and in the flurry of the moment I forgot it. So I tugged away at the trigger, whilst Rob raved away at my slowness: it *wouldn't* go! By this time the moose—no doubt surprised, too—had recovered, turned round, and were just disappearing in the woods, when I got my patent safety all right, and dropped the hindmost in her tracks! At last I was rewarded for my trouble; but how nearly that Indian summer's day-dream had made me lose her! I shan't try to finish it, for, as I said before, you can't appreciate the charms I was trying to describe, unless you go to the woods of Canada, so I should be only losing time. Perhaps we didn't take *all* the tit-bits for supper that evening; but I know we did take the kidneys and marrow-bones, the skin and the moufle, or nose, which is the rarest delicacy of the moose, and went on our way rejoicing.

As good luck—whom you may remember we invoked in the morning after the canoe disaster—would have it, another lumberman's hut was within a couple of miles. We had stopped and taken a look at it as we came down, and now remembered a barrel of rock-salt was left



in it, which we determined to appropriate, and salt down the moose. It always seemed to me sad waste to leave hundredweights of good meat in the woods, and I was therefore very glad when Rob proposed to cut all the meat off the bones, and, by placing a good layer of salt between each of meat, try to keep it till snow on the ground would enable him to fetch it home easily. The next day we accordingly carried out our plans, salted our moose, and hid it 'convenient' to our first camping-ground on the St. John's.

And now, having been nearly three weeks away, and killed a moose, I began to think of returning. Splendid days, and, if possible, lovelier moonlight nights, are all very well, but you know '*toujours perdrix*' is somewhat satiating; and, besides, I had made a kind of promise to a certain individual not to be away so very long; and I thought, too, that if she found I preferred nature, moose, and Rob to her, now, I might at some future time be turned over to them altogether; and that when I wanted a valise or galop, I might be told to go to—the woods. So we packed up and went, first hiding our canoe, in the event of another trip. I never went again, but hope some one got the benefit of our leaky old bark. Making a long march of it, we got over some twenty-five miles, which is hard work through the woods, especially carrying a fair load, and roused up Mrs. Rob to give us supper just as she was in her first dream of her loving husband.

Rob found household cares requiring his immediate attention; and I was rather done up with the long march: so, instead of being off at daylight for Quebec, I took it easy, and went out partridge-shooting next day. It seems strange to shoot partridges in trees; but such is the case here. A dog is used to find and put the bird up, when he immediately flies to a tree, under which the dog, if he be a good one, stops and barks till his master comes and shoots the bird: just a little better than rook-shooting if you use a rifle; but some shoot for the 'pot,' as I did in the woods, when I was

hungry and knocked them over with shot. Getting a few brace of birds, my moose moulle, skin, and hoofs, I said good-bye to bright little Mrs. Rob, and with many a shake of the hand from my newly-made friends, especially old John Home, and promising to send Rob back as soon as possible, we set off in his spring cart for Quebec by daylight next morning. Stopping at 'the Store' and Post-office about seven, the proprietor kindly offered me about a gill of rum, which he called his morning bitter, and highly recommended as a tonic. Declining his kind offer, we pushed on, the roads being in rather better order than coming up, avoided our cosmopolitan friend, and put up at the ubiquitous sign, 'The Half-way House,' for dinner; then on again; and after a drive of thirteen hours the little Canadian horse trotted into Point Levi, as if nearly fifty miles, with a heavy load and only middling roads—not to say bad in some places—was quite the right thing to do. I was not long in transferring myself to the ferry-boat, and soon was back again in the grim old citadel of Quebec.

'Who missed the moose?' was the first query; 'Who won the race?' I responded; and so, by carefully asking question for question, and hearing all about the great victory and the finest race ever run before, I told my own tale. I gained time for supper, and over that comforting meal forgot my disasters, and expatiated only on my luck. The arrival next morning of Rob and the moose-skin nearly dispelled all doubts of my success; and I may say they were totally removed when the moulle made its appearance as one of the side dishes that evening.

P. L.

NOTE.—For the benefit of any reader likely to try the woods in Canada, I may say that he can find no better guides about the head waters of the St. John than the Bagby brothers at Standon up the Etchemin. I started a month too late; the weather was too cold for moose to be in the rivers or lakes, and it is impossible at that time of the year to get at them on foot; but the immense number of tracks in every direction showed their presence in abundance. My expenses, including the journey from and to Quebec, were about three dollars a day. A subsequent trip in winter quite justified my estimate of the number of moose: we killed seven in ten days.

## THE LONG VACATION.



LONG vacation—these are words of very pleasant import, where they have any import at all. But to great flakes of even the well-to-do part of the community they are without any practical meaning. The long vacation, in its narrowest sense, is the period of time extending generally from about the first week in August to the first week in November, during which the Law Courts are shut. In another sense it embraces a rather longer interval, that is from the middle of June to the middle of October, which is the University long vacation. But those classes of persons who are directly affected by these arrangements constitute but a small fraction of either London Society or English Society. The lawyers, indeed, are not a class of men who allow their lights to lie under

a bushel, and what they want in numbers they may be held almost to make up for in talk, activity, and general noise. Still they are, comparatively, a small class. But then, as this is likewise the period during which that section of the fashionable world which doesn't shoot partridges devotes itself to the amusements of watering-places, foreign or domestic, as the case may be, a great number of people who have no more reason for going out of town in September and October than in June or July, still love to follow the fashion, and swell the aggregate of those, the period of whose holiday is co-extensive with the long vacation. But even when we have allowed for all these various tribes, who for one reason or other seek their relaxation in the autumn, there still remains behind the immense mass of 'the people in general,' who either take it just when they can get it, or who choose for preference the full summer months for their country excursions. For all these the term 'long vacation' is meaningless. You hear of men and families going off to the sea-side in the dog-days, which though it *seems* a rational proceeding, cannot of course really be so: and you meet them just returned, about the streets, towards the last week of August, brown, healthy, and cheerful, and not in the least in low spirits at their degraded condition and dismal prospects. However, we have nothing to do just now with low people of this kind. Let us leave them to their autumn in town; and let us hope they will patronise those unhappy managers of theatres who announce that they intend to re-open with a surprisingly strong cast on the 'first of September'—ugh!

Well—the question arises in all men of well-regulated minds and proper habits about the beginning of August, what are they to do this year? There are of course a certain class of men, and in many respects, most fortunate men they are, for whom the question is already answered. They go home. To hall, or grange, or parsonage, or quiet country towns, or what not, away go the sons of squires, and rectors, and bankers, and solicitors, and country doctors, who are at the bar or in any other line of life which recognizes the long vacation, there to ride and ramble, and fish, and shoot, and picnic, and dance, and flirt for three delightful months, returning to town usually in a more sentimental frame of mind than they left it in. Such men very wisely regard the long vacation as an opportunity for combining pleasure with economy, so that their quarter's allowance which falls in at Michaelmas, or the fees which they hope will be paid up on their return to town, may be made available for the settlement of sundry small outstanding accounts which the unavoidable expenses of Greenwich, Richmond, and

the opera did not permit of their liquidating before their departure from London. Good luck to all such. May their governors live long! and their dividends never be less! But in the case of men differently situated, the aforesaid question arises, where shall they go? Any time between the middle of July and the middle of August this is sure to be a leading topic of conversation in the club smoking-room, at the Sunday breakfast-table, or under whatever other circumstances men do most freely unbutton either their minds or their waistcoats. Jack is for Switzerland, Bob is for Baden, Dick is for Algeria, Tom has got an invitation to the moors, and will circuit be over in time for him to get there by the 12th? Biggs has a hankering after Scarborough, where he rather expects to meet his partner at the last ball; and you know he can do his quarterly article there just as well as in chambers—of course. James, a loose and lavish character, thinks of taking a little fishing or shooting for himself, with a cottage. And so the schemes go round. Preparation and anticipation are half the fun of all holidays, and the present writer, who is partial to shooting, though he does not take cottages, and has no 'missus,' can safely say that greasing his boots, laying in his powder and shot, buying his certificate, and talking about these things to his friends, form a large element in the pleasure he derives from that sport. Well—each man's path is clearly chalked out at last, and then comes the start. I like watching a man packing up and making ready; and I like seeing him off, and taking a parting liquor with him at the railway station or on board the steamer. The last time I did so was on board the Boulogne steamer at London Bridge. I left the tavern with my friend, Patrick Rogue, Esq., M. A. C., of the Temple, about 11 p.m., who was bound on a mountaineering excursion. I accompanied him to his chambers, where in an exceedingly short space of time he had divested himself of all semblance of a decent London gentleman, and was ready to march out of the Whitefriars gate

in a costume compounded of one-third of an omnibus-conductor's, one-third of a gamekeeper's, and one-third of a tramp's. With a huge knapsack on his back, and an alpenstock in his hand, he trudged manfully along Thames Street, I striding by his side, until we got on board the boat. It was a lovely night, and as the people lay sleeping about on deck in rather a dim light, covered up with what looked like tarpaulins, I nearly sat down upon one or two gentlemen and ladies at the imminent risk of suffocating them, or making their noses bleed. We had some brandy-and-water; and about two o'clock the boat sheered off, and away went Paddy, wreaths of smoke curling round his wide-awake and shiny red face as we lost sight of him.

English tourists scatter a good deal in the long vacation; but of those who go abroad, the Rhine probably draws the greatest number. Everybody knows all about the Rhine. The long vacation in Rhineland is as familiar to the British public as the long vacation at the Lakes. Even the least travelled among the readers of 'London Society' will, probably, have seen once the Conversation Haus, the tables, and the pretty walks and drives at Baden-Baden: the castle at Heidelberg, the walls of Ehrenbreitstein at Coblenz, and the Château D'Else up among the lovely wooded hills at the back of the Moselle: will have dined on board the Rhine steamers, and drunk the good wine at Bingen. But we might go on for ever enumerating special points like these. The Rhine has been done: and pleasant as its waters are we shall not linger on its banks. The present writer reached it by way of Trèves, and so down the Moselle by steamer to Coblenz. As a railway, we believe, is now open from Luxembourg to Trèves, and as Trèves is a fine old Roman city which well repays a visit, that route is strongly to be commended.

The most exciting trip, to the imagination at least, of a man about to taste the long vacation, is described in Mr. Ormsby's recent

work called 'Vacation Rambles in Algeria.' To live with real Arabs in a real desert, to go out shooting real lions—not indeed that he ever shot one—and to be 'a child of freedom and a child of nature' to the extent that, as it seems, a man may be in this agreeable region, is a brightly tempting programme to the regular London man, if he have but a little pluck and muscle. The risk which you run of being murdered does not appear to be greater than it is in an Italian valley or an English railroad: while the danger of being crunched and mumbled by wild beasts, though different in kind, is not worse in degree than the danger you incur by shooting in company with strangers at the inoffensive game of these islands. A *fico* for the Rhine and Rhine cup base! I talk of Africa and savage joys. Your regular long-vacation man seldom gets so far as Egypt and round the coast of Syria. But if we could, every now and then, get a jubilee year, in which no work was done, and the pay not stopped, I would go right round the Mediterranean from Morocco back to Gibraltar, taking in Constantinople, Greece, all the Islands, Italy, and the south of France, and Spain in one glorious circuit. However, Mr. Ormsby tells us that a man can dine in London on Monday, and be in a position to furnish dinner to a lion on the following Friday in Algeria, so that our Temple friends who care for 'big game' may really think seriously about the matter. Of other game, woodcocks, snipe, and red-legged partridges are sure to be abundant.

The Rhine and the Sahara represent the two extreme poles of life between which the British bar fluctuates during the long vacation if it seeks its recreation abroad, as a Devonshire watering-place and a Scotch moor may be held to do for those who seek it at home. Between these two extremes are many grades and varieties. But it boots not to dwell upon them all. We have had a birdseye view of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Let us now take the same kind of survey of England, Ireland, and Scotland.

It is needless to say that at all the regular places—Tenby, Llandudno, Weymouth, Sidmouth, Worthing, Hastings, Folkestone, Dover, Walmer, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Margate, Lowestoft, Cromer, Skegness, Whitby, Scarborough—the British bar is to be seen in all the glory of *déshabille*; when, like Sir Robert Walpole, *mutatis mutandis*, they

'Smile without art, and win without a fee.'

They may be seen at Killarney and Loch Katrine, in the Orkneys, and the Scillies, at Windermere and Ullawater, on the top of Snowdon, in the Isle of Man, in Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark. Certainly the pleasantest way of spending the long vacation in England, if a man is left to his own resources, is to ramble about from one of these places to another, according as his fancy leads him. Each and all have their charms; and it is easy to combine a good deal of real hard pedestrianism, with a good deal of easy sea-side lounging, bathing, and billiard-playing. There is no occasion to describe life at an English watering-place any more than life at a German one. There is the early walk down to the sands, and plunge into the sea before breakfast: there is the voracious meal of fish flesh and fowl: the *boa constrictor*-like torpor which succeeds it; while you smoke lazily and look from your windows upon the wide expanse of still blue sea, dotted with a few sails, which stretches away outside the harbour: there is the noon-day lounge upon the sands, where you sit on chairs and read newspapers, while the after-breakfast bathers, ladies and all, are going through their watery gymnastics: there is luncheon between one and two: there is riding, driving, walking, or sailing, till six: there is a famous dinner, unless intercepted by a picnic; after which you seek the pier, or the cliff, or the library, or the assembly-room, or the theatre, or the parade, or what not, where you again may be with your fellow-creatures till ten o'clock or so, listening to the unseen splash of the waves upon the dark shore: or gazing dreamily over the moonlit

sea, and becoming romantic. Then you go to bed, and the next day pursue the same round. Your health is splendid, your spirits high, your cares none. And after a fortnight of such life, when you begin to want a change, knapsack on back, set off across the hills to some other cover lying forty or fifty miles distant; and be sure to take the bridle-roads, avoiding as much as possible the towns and sticking to the sleepy old villages—

'Deep bosomed, happy, fair, with orchard lawns,  
And bowery hollows crossed with summer sea.'

So universal has this kind of thing become now, that the long vacation has produced within the last few years quite a literature of its own. This greater physical activity among the educated classes may be variously explained. A hosiery the other day, whose doings in the way of flannel shirts, combs, wool socks, and so on, bring him into contact with the movement party, attributed it all to the volunteers. 'Afore that time, sir,' he said to me, 'gents used to lazy about shocking.' This worthy fellow's hypothesis unluckily will not hold water, as alpenstocks and knapsacks were in full play before the year 1858. The volunteers may have increased their popularity, but did not create it. Some trace it back to the time of the Crimean war. For ourselves, we cannot undertake to philosophise with the thermometer at 90°; and nothing but a dry gravel square to look at, which seems to suck up all the heat and throw it back at your open window hotter and fiercer than before. The only thing in which every one must agree, is, that the general progress of knowledge on social, sanitary, and physical subjects generally, which has brought in tubs, discarded tight clothes and 'stiffeners,' and effected various other changes which are even at this moment suspected to be undermining the British constitution, has opened men's eyes to their real physical interests in all cases. Exactly when, where, and how the change began, it is idle to discuss.

If neither walking tours nor watering-places are to your taste,

perhaps shooting is. Leaving out of question the moors, which belong chiefly to persons whom the long vacation affecteth not, few things will restore a man's energies, muscles, and peptics better than six weeks' partridge-shooting. Shooting ground within fifty miles of London is eagerly snapped up by members of the Bar who are in pretty flourishing circumstances. For an outlay of a hundred a year, including everything, you can get a pretty fair bit of partridge-shooting—say a thousand acres—and a man, not a regular keeper, but who will do well enough to look after it. If you want cover shooting as well, you must pay a good deal more. I am not counting dogs, because those you can sell again; and all sporting dogs are nice companions, even if you don't want to shoot over them. It is a glorious thing for the man who has been slaving in London, at rare intervals of a day or two each, since November, to wake up at four o'clock in the morning on the 1st of September, in a good bird country, in a good season, in a good house. Out of bed you leap, and make your first rush to the window, and the second to your tub, providently filled over night. By George, though, the water is not warm. Never mind, you'll be warm enough before the day's over. Splash away. Well, that is over: and now, on such mornings, with such work cut out for them as you have got cut out for you, to persons about to shave I would say, don't. You'll infallibly have to shave again, when, fourteen hours later, you dress for dinner, the heat having acted on your bristles like a hot-bed on a cucumber, and forced them into preternatural growth. The longer they are then, the better hold you will get of them, and the cleaner you will sweep them off. What does it signify how you look while you are beating Muggins's swedes, or Podden's thirty-acre wheat stubble? And even if that very pretty girl who made tea for you, and sang and asked you riddles (what a dreadful practice, by-the-by, this is!) last night, should appear with the luncheon-basket, in a

hat, boots, and petticoat, to which the cestus of Aphrodite herself must have been as inferior as bows are to rifles—never mind; perhaps she won't look at you, or, if she does, will admire your manly hirsuteness. Therefore, say I again, don't shave. Well, you're down to breakfast at five; that meal is over by six; another hour spent in various preparations, and at seven you start for a point about three miles distant, whence your beat lies back again towards home. Eight o'clock is a good time to begin partridge-shooting, because, while the birds have done feeding, the dew is not yet off the ground, and consequently the scent is still strong. Well, of course you beat round the grass fields, go carefully over the large wheat stubble, and—find nothing. 'Where can that covey have got to?' says some one. 'Why, they was hatched here,' says the keeper; 'I could allers see 'em any morning afore to-day.' The mystery is soon solved; the birds have run through the hedge. And while you are talking, up they get just behind you, with a loud and sudden whirr that makes your pulse beat. 'Dang them birds!' says the keeper. 'Mark!' roar the shooters, and a boy on a pony gallops to the nearest rising ground. Presently he waves his hand. It's all right; he's got them; and off you go, happy and tremulous with excitement. The first shot of the season; what a joy it is! The luncheon how refreshing; the saunter home in the fresh evening air how exquisite; the dinner how good; the old port how soothing. The only misfortune is that when you go into the drawing-room, and Letty, or Amy, or Lucy, or whatever the pretty girl's name is, wants you to talk about the last novel, or to turn over her leaves for her at the piano, you are liable to irresistible drowsiness, which not all her charms can dissipate.

Cover-shooting scarcely comes within the long vacation. Some men, indeed, shoot their covers as early as the first week in November. But it is a common practice to wait till the leaves are quite off. The weather, too, will be colder and

dampier, and there is not that delight and glory in the open air which is essential to a Long Vacation pleasure. We therefore dismiss it for the present, not without some vague intention of returning to it on a future occasion.

There is of course no absolute necessity for men in the long vacation to betake themselves to any particular species of active amusement, such as climbing or shooting, or to indulge in the peculiar dissipation of watering-places, foreign or domestic. There are men fortunate enough to possess numerous acquaintances among the nobility and gentry of these realms; and a long vacation may be worse spent than in passing from one to another of the homes of merry England. A good country house in autumn is full of amusements, even without the aid of field sports. From morning to night there is always something going on. And what a pleasant meeting 'is breakfast in a well-regulated establishment of this nature. To come down on a fine fresh sunny morning, about a quarter of an hour before the lady of the house makes her appearance, and to find a couple of jolly girls picking flowers, or perhaps feeding birds on the lawn outside, while the morning breeze tosses their light brown hair, and gently swells their pretty muslins, puts you in good-humour for the day. Then in you go with a rose at your button-hole, and an honest appetite, which it seems impossible to satiate, and discuss at intervals the plans of the day. Perhaps there is to be a picnic, perhaps archery, perhaps croquet, perhaps nothing at all but sauntering and strolling about round the 'Wilderness,' or along the brook, or through the wood, and talking about Tennyson or Patti, or Trollope, or the flirtation that is going on between the curate and the doctor's girl, or the coming race ball, or the past season, according to your taste and your opportunities. Ah! a long languishing August day spent in that style has set its mark on many a gallant Templar who came down fancy free to spend his fortnight at the Hall. I



have forgotten, moreover, both riding and billiard-playing, two most dangerous and enticing pastimes in the company of ladies. Billiards are peculiarly favourable to the art of flirtation. The attitudes into which a lady must throw herself are so many incentives to coquetry, while the constant bending down of the head across the table enables a proficient in the business to make dreadful play with the eyes. For a similar reason, you can say more to a lady while you are riding at her bridle-rein than perhaps in almost any other position. For she need never appear to be offended, unless she really is so; the mane of her horse, or the skirt of her habit, or something of that kind, being quite sufficient to engage her attention, so as to avert the necessity of looking you in the face without any appearance of either rudeness or embarrassment.

However, pending the commencement of the day's operations, whatever they are to be, there will be an hour or two of general lounging, not unaccompanied by smoke. You now visit the stables, the kennels, the tame pheasants, perhaps the pigs, possibly, in these philanthropic days, the Reformatory. The perambulation over, you come indoors again, and either read a novel or play billiards till luncheon, after which, the serious business of the day fairly begins. Perhaps by great good-luck there is an agricultural meeting in the neighbourhood—a bazaar, perhaps—and a dinner of males afterwards in the Town Hall, or at the Tudor Arms, or some such fabulous animals, whence the London gentlemen return at night to show off their wit before the ladies by a few caricatures of the rustics, and to eat a little cosy supper with them before retiring to the smoking-room. I believe there is a natural taste for dissipation in all women, which recommends the idea of supper to them as something fast; and as their digestive organs are generally in better order than men's, they enjoy a little bit of irregular feeding hugely.

This same smoking-room is indeed the inner sanctuary of a country

house. The author of 'Maurice Dering,' perhaps, 'werges on the poetical' in his description of this retreat. We question the propriety, as a mere matter of taste, of such rooms being luxuriously furnished, except in the way of easy chairs. There should be characteristic distinctions between this room and others. There should be an absence of all nick-knackery: good, solid oak furniture; a good bookcase; two or three good pictures; and a portrait or two of your favourite worthies; everything, in fact, should be suggestive of gentle meditation, more than of voluptuous ease: a smoking-room should be an intellectual not a sensual apartment, and should be severe in its arrangements rather than florid or luxurious. A country house smoking-room in the long vacation will often hear some rare good talk. Squires, now-a-days, are cultivated men, and when stimulated by the conversation of professional friends, whose thoughts are not exclusively of bullocks, can fire up and hold their own well. These, indeed, are the true *noctes ceneque Deum*—one of the richest and latest products of Long Vacation.

It is possible also, gentle reader, much as you may doubt it, to spend the Long Vacation in London. There is a certain peculiar charm about town and its suburbs in the month of September which most men experience who try it, but which it is very difficult to analyse. Some people think it is because you have London to yourself. I cannot say that I share in that opinion, although, doubtless, the circumstance in question may have something to do with it. I think a more poetical feeling is at the bottom of it. The decline of the year is brought home to one's mind in London more forcibly by the sudden contrast between full and empty streets than it is in the country by the gradual fall of the leaf. To the Bar in particular, to whom this paper is respectfully dedicated, the year begins in November, so that September and October are, in more senses than one, its last moments. There is, then, a gentle melancholy, a touch-

ing quiet, an air of almost reproachful resignation about London in September which goes to the heart of a native. Even Cremorne wears a pensive look; and I remember that in the days of Vauxhall the dancers there in September used to remind me of that scene at Florence, in the 'Last of the Tribunes,' in which the ladies and the knights are dancing, singing, and love-making in their suburban garden, while the plague was raging in the city. The cold October nights, frosty and windy, I knew were close at hand, and might enter in at any moment: a reflection which lent additional interest somehow to the Bacchanalian groups all round me. Yes, I am convinced it is the romance of decay which gives London its great charm at this season. You would observe it in the country, perhaps, just as much if you always lived in the country. But, as it is, coming down from town at the end of August, the fields and trees seem to you still in the freshness of youth; and it is not till near the middle of

October, at all events, that the signs of death begin to strike you.

The middle of October! Yes, we are getting on. Bob has come back from Africa, burnt to the colour of a brick, from the nape of the neck all round to the gullet. Tom is on his way from Paris; James has done with the partridges; in another fortnight term will begin; the 'Olive' will have resumed its sittings; London will be full again; the long vacation will be over. I write these lines on the 19th of August. Is it not a cold-blooded thing to talk about November now? However, every human thing has an end as well as a beginning; and if one is to describe it completely, one must describe both. Yes, even now, I am sorry to say, I can hear, like another Cassandra, the sound of laden cabs for ever rattling over the stones from London Bridge, and Paddington, and Pimlico, ringing the knell of the holidays: but, at all events, mine is yet to come, so good-bye.

## JACK AT SCHOOL.

ON the bosom of the Thames, within hail of the Erith shore, there lies a man-of-war named the 'Worcester,' whose destiny has been a singular one. She was laid down in the days when we were fighting the French both on sea and land; but it so happened, owing to the war having been brought to a conclusion, that there was no immediate need for more wooden walls, and the 'Worcester' was not commissioned. Her services were not required then, and for some reason or other, best known to the Admiralty, they have never been called into requisition since; and thus the vessel enjoys the singular distinction of being a veteran man-of-war that has never been to sea. Her path has never been over anything more stormy than the placid bosom of the Thames; her home has been chiefly in the dock, and her flag has braved nothing more serious in the way of battle than the gun practice on the Woolwich marshes.

Yet, for all this, it is highly probable that, in her last account, the 'Worcester'

will be a heavier creditor of the nation than many more famous vessels that have gone forth upon the stormy seas and fought and conquered. This apparent paradox will be fully understood when it is explained that the 'Worcester' has become a school for training boys for the profession of the sea. The difficulty of finding properly qualified officers for merchant vessels has long been felt by our shipowners. Of late years our maritime commerce has increased at a marvellous rate, great improvements have taken place in the construction of ships, important discoveries have been made in the art of navigation—everything relating to the sailing of the seas has made progress except the officers. In most cases down to this present time the skippers and mates of a merchant vessel have remained the same uneducated, ignorant, coarse, brutal men that they were in the old days, when omens were consulted more than charts, when the chronometer and the sextant were regarded as new-

fangled playthings, and when voyages were made at hazard, as a drunken man staggers forth in the dark, trusting to the chapter of accidents.

To remedy this state of things, and to secure for their vessels competent officers, the shipowners of Liverpool some years ago established a training ship in the Mersey. The experiment proving successful, it was decided to establish a

similar ship in the port of London; and on application to the Admiralty for a suitable vessel, the Lords Commissioners placed her Majesty's ship 'Worcester' at the disposal of the association. The institution has already received great encouragement. A nomination to a naval cadetship in her Majesty's service has been placed at the disposal of the committee of management by Lord



See p. 246.

Clarence Paget, the Secretary to the Admiralty; Mr. Henry Green, the large shipowner, has promised six cadetships to be awarded, as prizes, to the most deserving boys who shall have been not less than two years on board the training ship; and the Board of Trade allows two years passed on board the

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'Worcester' to count as one year of sea service, which enables a cadet who has been two years on board the 'Worcester' to pass an examination as second officer after three years' service at sea. Thus at last, though very late in the day, our shipowners have become alive to the necessity of giving Jack a regular edu-

cation before sending him to sea. Hitherto the popular idea has been that boys intended for marine officers should be sent to sea young; and almost as a rule the ranks of the merchant marine service have been recruited from idle and worthless boys, who have been found unfit for anything else. It certainly was a strange idea (and how it could ever have been entertained is a marvel) that a lad who is good for nothing on shore should be considered capable of discharging the responsible duties of navigating a ship on the wide and trackless sea. But such has been the notion and such the practice, until the interests of maritime commerce have become so large and important that nothing short of the highest skill and efficiency in naval officers can possibly be tolerated. Henceforward shipowners will require their officers—their skippers and mates—to be not only men of education and skill, but gentlemen.

I have had an opportunity on two occasions of inspecting this new floating naval school. My last visit was paid on breaking-up day, when the prizes were awarded to the successful scholars by the Right Honourable Milner Gibson, President of the Board of Trade. I don't know when I have enjoyed a trip on the river so thoroughly, or when I have been so much gratified at the day's end by all I heard and saw. We went down the river from Blackwall in a steamer specially chartered for the occasion; and as we were a very select party, and had a band of music all to ourselves—the band of Mr. Green's ship-building yard—the people whom we passed in boats and barges, and on the decks of heavily laden merchantmen struggling up against the tide, evidently regarded us as persons of importance and distinction. What their precise idea with respect to us was I cannot say; but if it had been a little later in the season it would probably have taken the form of a suspicion that we were cabinet ministers, that our patronage as regards the annual fish dinner had been transferred from Greenwich to Erith, and that we had so far conformed to the spirit of the times as to take our wives with us. As it was, we were greeted with cheers at every turn, a circumstance which I will be candid enough to ascribe to the importance which we derived from the band of music, combined with the Union Jack fluttering at the fore.

After half an hour's steaming we came in sight of the 'Worcester.' There was no mistaking her, for it was a gala day on board, and she was dressed in her best. She had, as a non-nautical

excursionist remarked, 'her stays laced, and all her ribbons flying.' The moment our boat was descried, the boys on board scrambled into the rigging to man yards. In their dark blue jackets and trousers, twisting their lithe bodies in and out of the shrouds, they conveyed the idea of a shoal of leeches crawling up the sides of a Brobdingnagian bottle. As we steamed alongside, our band musically proclaimed our importance by playing 'See the Conquering Hero comes;' and the boys in the rigging received us with loud huzzas. The band and the boys could not have done more if we had been Admirals of the Fleet. Long before we blundering landmen had clambered up the gangway, the boys had dropped from the rigging and were standing on the deck to receive us. And the first remark of a motherly lady, when she had fully recovered from the perilous ascent of the gangway, and her maternal eyes rested on the row of smart, smiling, clean, open-faced lads, was, 'Oh, what nice boys! I should like to kiss them all round.' Now, I am sure that, whatever I may have to say about the training ship, I shall not be able to pay her a finer compliment than this. When a woman feels a desire to kiss a boy who is not her own boy, you may be sure that he is a good-looking boy, a well-dressed boy, a clean boy, a cheerful boy. The boys on board the 'Worcester' were all this; and though some were, of course, handsomer and better looking than others, yet discipline and training had given them all the same uniform look of well-mannered young gentlemen. You would have said that they were destined to be midshipmen on board a man-of-war, rather than in the merchant service.

While we are waiting for Mr. Milner Gibson, we may as well go over the ship and see what is to be seen. Above here, on the upper deck, the vessel is furnished in all respects like a sea-going craft of the first class. The whole of the rigging is complete, with every rope, spar, and sail which a sailor is required to know and put his hand to on a voyage; and each porthole has a gun with all the appliances for working in trim order and ready at hand. So complete is the 'Worcester' in this respect, that she might be put to sea and cleared for action at any moment. Here on this deck about two hundred boys are exercised in all the duties of a first-class ship under an able commander and efficient subordinate officers. They are taught practical seamanship, such as knotting, splicing, reefing, furling,

heaving the lead, navigation, and gunnery. Their training, however, begins on the main deck below. This deck, which extends the whole length of the ship, is both the schoolroom and the dining-room. Dinner tables and 'decks' alternate throughout its whole length. The instruction here is carried on by several masters—well qualified gentlemen from the universities, who are masters, not in the nautical, but the school sense. We passed one of them just now on the main deck in his college cap and gown, and wondered at the apparition of a 'college don' mingling officially with blue jackets on a quarter-deck. Here, then, in this spacious schoolroom, well lighted by portholes, which have been converted into windows, the boys are taught the usual branches of a sound English education, with the addition of geometry, trigonometry, mechanics, the steam engine, marine surveying, chart drawing, and French.

The prospectus of this seminary for young gentlemen sailors sets forth that the terms of admission are thirty-five guineas per annum, payable half-yearly in advance; two guineas per annum for medical attendance; and two guineas extra for Latin, which, however, is optional. Each boy is provided with a uniform, for which five guineas are charged; and parents are required to provide under clothing and shoes according to a fixed scale. No boys are admitted who are under twelve or over fifteen years of age; nor are any to remain on board the ship after they have attained the age of seventeen. All candidates must be approved by the committee, and passed by the medical officer, and none are deemed eligible who cannot read and write fairly, and perform the simple rules of arithmetic. Holidays of five weeks' duration are given at Midsummer, and four weeks at Christmas. I was informed by a parent of one of the boys that the whole expense of keeping his son on board the 'Worcester' was about 50*l.* a year, which, it must be allowed, is a very moderate sum considering that the boy is not only educated in a general way, but is, at the same time, taught a profession, and qualified to earn his living, with every prospect of advancement, the moment he leaves the ship. In ordinary cases, when a boy comes home from school, *Paterfamilias* is utterly at a loss what to do with him. The youth has learned a great deal theoretically, but nothing practically. He has to go to school again in some shop or office to learn his trade or profession. But the 'Worcester' conducts

the two processes at once, and sends home a boy who is well instructed in all the usual branches of knowledge, and is, at the same time, a practised sailor.

The standard of education on board the 'Worcester' is a high one. At the recent examination questions such as the following were correctly answered by the boys without the assistance of books. In arithmetic: Find the sum of '125 of 3*os.*, '375 of 13*s.* 4*d.*, and '875 of 17*s.* 6*d.* In geometry: About a given circle to describe a triangle, equiangular to a given triangle. In algebra: Divide  $\times \frac{1}{2} - 4 \times \frac{3}{4} + 6 \times - 2 \times \frac{1}{2}$ , by  $\times \frac{1}{2} - 4 \times \frac{3}{4} + 2$ . In navigation: If a ship sail from latitude 57° 58' N., longitude 70° 3' E. on the following true courses: W.N.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. 24, N.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. 18, S.S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. 32, S. by E. 14 miles: required her latitude. In nautical astronomy: At what time will the star  $\beta$  Scorpii pass the meridian of a place in latitude 37° 40' S., and longitude, 16° W., on December 15th, and at what distance N. or S. of the zenith? In trigonometry: From B, the top of a ship's mast, which was 80 feet above the water, the angle of depression of another ship's hull at C upon the water was 20°: required the distance of the ships.

A skipper or mate of the old school would be perfectly dumbfounded by such questions. The very language in which they are conveyed would be so much Greek to him. Yet by the boys of the 'Worcester' all these questions, and many more equally as difficult, were answered with the greatest readiness.

Once more, at a given signal, the boys scramble into the rigging and man the yards, while the indefatigable band plays 'See the Conquering Hero.' This time the conquering hero who is coming aboard is the President of the Board of Trade, whom we descry under an umbrella on the deck of an approaching steamer. It certainly was very unhand-some of the elements to come down on the head of the great commercial department in the way it did; but Mr. Milner Gibson's good-humour was as proof against any annoyance as his umbrella was against the pelting shower, and he came up the sloppy gangway smiling and prepared to shake hands with all mankind. And all the mankind and womankind on board actually did shake hands with him. It was an opportunity not to be missed. It is not every day that Brown, Jones, and Robinson have a chance of shaking hands with a cabinet minister; and a cabinet minister coming up a slippery ladder in a shower of rain is a person to be taken advantage of. He was too uncertain

of his footing, too glad to reach the *lignum firmum* of the 'Worcester's' quarter-deck to refuse anything. So he submitted himself in the most amiable manner to be shaken by the hand by all comers.

Owing to the rather showery disposition of the weather, the ceremony of distributing the prizes was performed on the main deck. Mr. Henry Green, one of the most active and liberal supporters of the institution, took the chair under a canopy formed of Union Jacks, and Mr. Milner Gibson and other gentlemen sat at a table in front of him, while the boys disposed themselves in a group facing the chairman—the scene reminding me of the court-martial in 'Black-eyed Susan,' the only court-martial, by the way, I ever witnessed. After the reading of the report and the speeches (which were a great deal too long), the boys stepped forward one by one to receive the prizes from the hands of Mr. Gibson; and here again *Materfamilias* was prompted to give audible expression to her motherly feelings, especially when a very little boy, as the reward of nautical knowledge which would have made Lord Nelson stare, received the prize of a telescope. *Materfamilias* said, 'Bless his little heart!' and I am sure she would have seized and kissed the youngster there and then, if she could only have got at him. One after the other the lads went up to the table to receive the reward of their proficiency, each one receiving a hearty cheer as he retired with his prize, covered with honour and with blushes. The prizes consisted chiefly of nautical instruments, such as quadrants and sextants, telescopes, pocket compasses, and books on seamanship, some of the articles being of considerable value, which was greatly enhanced in every case by an inscription setting forth the boy's name and qualifications. In addition to the prizes, nine appointments as midshipmen were given by Mr. Green and other shipowners, to boys who had been two years on board the 'Worcester' and had obtained their certificate of qualification. Each certificate bears on the back a record of the examination which the boy has passed. Thus it was certified that nine of the boys had passed a satisfactory examination in arithmetic, including vulgar and decimal fractions and proportion; that they could find the latitude by sun or star; furl a royal single-handed; heave the lead; give the soundings; pull an oar or steer a boat; also find the latitude by the pole star and the moon; find the error of chronometer and the longitude by chronometer;

take a lunar observation and deduce the longitude therefrom; note the variation of the compass by altitude and azimuth; also that they had a thorough knowledge of plane and spherical trigonometry, and the application of the latter to great circle sailing; and could, besides, construct marine charts, strap a block, turn in a dead eye, worm parcel, serve a rope, and pass an carring. In fact, those nine young gentlemen were master of a score of arts which very few of those present had ever heard the names of. It was a wonder, indeed, how such very small heads could contain so much knowledge.

The courtesy and gentlemanly bearing which distinguished the lads as a body spoke highly for the system under which they had been trained. We had ample proofs of the progress they had made in their studies, in the examination papers submitted to our inspection on the main-deck. Seeing them strolling arm-in-arm on the upper deck, showing each other their prizes, conversing with the greatest cheerfulness and animation, and all looking fresh, healthy, and full of the capacity for enjoyment, it was equally evident that the closest attention had been paid to the cultivation of their morals, their manners, and their general conduct. As an example of the high moral tone that exists among them, I may mention a little incident which really occurred on board the ship. A new boy proposed to some of his schoolfellows that they should rob the fruit-seller when he came on board with his basket of wares. The proposition was acquiesced in, the boys never dreaming that their new companion was in earnest. The moment, however, they found that he was really bent upon carrying out his dishonest design, they denounced him to the whole ship. The boys themselves tried the offender by court-martial, found him guilty, and sent him to Coventry for a fortnight. Prayers are read every morning and evening, and Divine service is performed every Sunday by the chaplain. Bad language is strictly forbidden, and is never heard on board the 'Worcester.' The boys are taught that they may be very good sailors and very efficient officers without resorting to oaths, even to the mild extent of shivering their timbers. Each boy, on leaving the ship, is presented with a Bible by Mr. Bullivant, the indefatigable honorary secretary of the institution, who, in an inscription on the fly-leaf, gives them some very plain and sensible advice for their guidance through life.

I should not omit to mention that I



visited the lower deck, which forms one vast dormitory, slung from end to end with neat and trim hammocks. Here the sleeping accommodation is all that the fondest mamma could desire, the apartment being large and airy, and the bed-clothing scrupulously clean. There is a large lavatory adjoining, and every convenience for promoting health and cleanliness.

After the distribution of the prizes, three boats' crews, composed of the pupils, engaged in a rowing match, making a large circle three times round the ship. All the boys used their oars with great skill, and accomplished their task in a marvellously short time, and with much spirit. A dance was then extemporized on the upper deck, and was kept up with great animation until the little steamer came alongside to convey the visitors back to Blackwall. I can only say for myself that I was very loth to leave so pleasant and cheerful a scene; and, on behalf of all the schoolboys I had ever known, I envied those fortunate lads who were so carefully taught and so well cared for on board the 'Worcester.' It is not often that a man wishes to have his schooldays over again; but I could have wished for a return of my schooldays then, if I could have passed them like one of those bright, cheery-faced lads, who were now up in the rigging, manning the yards, and waving us adieu.

Having seen Jack at school afloat, I had an opportunity very shortly afterwards of visiting Jack at school ashore. It may be said that it is the interest of the shipowners to support the 'Worcester,' as by so doing they obtain better officers for their vessels. The asylum and school at Snarebrook is another affair. Here the shipowners exercise their charity with no prospect of reward, except in the consciousness of having discharged a Christian duty. The Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum was established in the year 1827, by a few benevolent individuals, who were touched by the destitute condition of the orphan children of sailors in the metropolis. It was at first a small house in Clarke Street, St. George's-in-the-East, where only from ten to twelve boys were received; but, as the funds increased, larger premises were taken in the Bow Road, where the number of children maintained was about 120. In 1860 it was resolved to erect a new building in the country, specially adapted to the requirements of the charity. The site at Snarebrook was

accordingly purchased; and the first stone of the building was laid by the late Prince Consort on the 28th of June, 1861. The building has, in this connection, a peculiar interest, from the fact that its foundation-stone was the last one laid by the lamented husband of our sovereign. On the 10th of July, 1862, the occupation of the new building was commenced; and on the 29th it was formally opened by Earl Russell, the president of the charity. This handsome asylum is well worth a visit. It is situated on the borders of Epping Forest, and the view from its tower takes in every variety of scenery for many miles around, including the silver Thames, creeping serpent-like to the sea, and bearing a great load of ships upon its glittering back. I dare say the half-holiday visitors to the Forest, when they have suddenly emerged from the sylvan glades of Epping, and come upon this imposing building, rearing its gabled roof and noble tower far above the tallest of the forest trees, have often wondered to what wealthy nobleman the mansion belonged. They could never dream that it was an asylum for the orphan children of merchant seamen. Yet there is no fault to be found with the magnificence of the establishment, since it has been built entirely at the expense of shipowners and others interested in the merchant service. As an example of the liberality with which the institution is supported, I may mention that Lady Morrison—a noble and good woman living in the neighbourhood—besides contributing many hundreds of pounds to the general fund, has, at her own sole expense, built a beautiful chapel, dedicated to 'the glory of God, and the use of the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum,' and also built and furnished a handsome reception-room in the interior of the building. Mr. Henry Green, in addition to his annual subscription, has given 500*l.* towards the expenses of the building; many other shipowners have been equally liberal, and Mr. Joseph Somes, M.P., is a donor to the amount of 262*l.*

There are at present in the asylum 145 children, 95 being boys, and 50 girls; but there is accommodation for 250. The staff consists of a resident matron, two schoolmasters, a schoolmistress, and a non-resident chaplain; and as servants, a nurse, cook, scullery-maid, two laundrymaids, two housemaids, a porter, and an engineer. The direction is confided by the supporters to a committee of management, consisting of twenty-four gentlemen, merchants,

shipowners, and others, of the City of London, with Mr. Henry Green, of the celebrated Blackwall firm, as treasurer. The design of the institution is to afford suitable relief to the orphans of seamen in the merchant service, by rescuing them from vice and profligacy, by providing them clothing, maintenance, and education; by endeavouring to implant in their minds the principles of religion and morality, and ultimately placing them, as far as practicable, in situations either at sea, as sailors, or on shore, in any other occupation they may be adapted for. As an example of the misfortunes which it is the object of the asylum to alleviate, I may quote a few entries from the pupil list:—

'John —; father was captain of the "A—," and is supposed to have been wrecked, with all hands, leaving a widow and three children dependent on their mother's exertions.'

'Edward —; father, ship's steward, brutally murdered by Chinese coolies, leaving a widow and four children.'

'Robert —; father was mate on board the "G—," and was drowned through a collision, leaving a widow and two children.'

'Margaret —; father was ship's carpenter, and died, leaving a widow and four children totally unprovided for.'

The orphans of all ranks and classes in the service are admitted on equal terms; from the children of the captain down to those of the cook. The boys are resident from 7 to 14, the girls from 7 to 15.

In going over the building, and seeing so many poor orphans fed and clothed and educated, and at the same time surrounded by every appliance for the promotion of comfort and health, I could not help a reflection—which frequently rises in my mind at the spectacle of a well-ordered British charity—a reflection which almost resolves itself into the wish that I were an unfortunate of some kind, that I might be so well treated, and be made so happy. It was near the close of a burning summer's day, that, in company with a friend, I arrived at the gate of the asylum. The bell was speedily answered by a little boy in blue, a sailor in miniature, one of the orphan inmates. He ran away with my card, and in a few minutes I was met at the door by Mr. Ridler, the first master, whose square cap proclaimed the university man. He took us at once into the schoolroom, a large, airy apartment, where the boys were busy at their tasks. It was a pleasant sight. The happy faces that were turned upon

us came like a gleam of sunshine. There was none of the weariness and lazy listlessness which are so often noticed in town schools, especially towards the close of the afternoon. The order was given for the band to turn out and give a specimen of their music; and immediately a dozen little fellows jumped up, and with magical quickness armed themselves with fife and flute and drum. At the first signal they all went off together with the sailors' hornpipe, marching out of the schoolroom, along the corridor, down the stairs, and out into the quadrangle. They played admirably, and with wonderful steadiness and precision. It was quite a treat to hear them, and no less wonderful to see them; for the fifes and the flutes were mere mites of boys, and the boy who beat the big drum was completely hid behind his instrument. Mr. Sketchley's friend, Mrs. Brown, would have said that he was a deal too young to be trusted with so big a drum. It certainly was wonderful that such very small boys should have acquired so much proficiency. The credit of this is entirely due to Mr. Ridler, the first master, who, besides being learned in Latin and Greek, and a master of all the eclogues, is a very accomplished musician, and a skilful performer on the piano and organ. I saw almost at a glance that Mr. Ridler was the right man in the right place. He had the right way with him; spoke cheerily and heartily, with something of a sailor's bluntness, and something of a sailor's colloquial familiarity of expression. There was nothing whatever of the pedagogue about him. And this was shown in a very striking way, when he tossed aside his books and his learning, and said, 'Now then, lads, the sailors' hornpipe; look sharp.' There were many proofs of Mr. Ridler's popularity with the pupils and their grateful parents—the mothers; for, alas! fathers they had none. A silver snuff-box, presented to him by the boys, and many other little gifts, including a 'copy of verses' from a sailor's widow—all she had to give. Perhaps this was the most precious gift of all, for it breathed a widow's blessing for kindness to her fatherless boy.

The education given at the asylum is of a thoroughly practical character—consisting chiefly of reading, writing, arithmetic, mathematics, with the addition of music if the pupils incline that way. A great point, however, is made of grounding them well in these branches, so that in after life they may build any higher superstructure of

knowledge which their position may admit of. As a proof that the training has been most successful, Mr. Hackwood, the secretary, assures me that there is not a known instance of any of the 600 children who have been educated at the asylum, having been unable to gain for themselves a good and honest livelihood; while many occupy high and trustworthy positions both on shore and at sea; and a large number now help to support the institution which was once their foster-home.

The building is remarkably well adapted for its purpose; and in this respect the architect seems to have pursued a course not very common, I regret to say, when institutions of this kind are concerned—that of consulting the convenience and accommodation of the inmates rather than his own glory as a rearer of a mere costly piece of ornamentation. The rooms and corridors are all plain and simple, but they are all large and airy, and furnished with every necessary convenience. Adjoining each set of dormitories there is a bathroom, with hot and cold water laid on; a sick-room, or hospital—very rarely occupied—and a washing and dressing room. I was particularly pleased with the arrangements for washing. In addition to the usual washhand basins, there is a row of little wooden tubs fixed to the floor, with the water laid on, and pipes for letting it run away immediately it is used. Each of these tubs is attached to a seat, and their use is very graphically indicated by the name given to them by the boys—'trotter-boxes.' The food is excellent and plentiful, I was assured, and this I could well believe, as all the boys and girls 'looked like their victuals.' I must not omit to mention that I peeped into the girls' schoolroom, and saw some forty or fifty little maidens engaged in sewing. Many

of them were very pretty, and in their trim, neat dresses, very picturesque. An artist might have picked a dozen models from among them. Besides the ordinary branches of education, the girls are taught sewing and housework. The present nurse was, twenty years ago, a girl in the asylum. The nurse preceding was also brought up in the asylum. She left to marry the engineer, who had likewise received the benefits of the institution. I mentioned just now that the infirmary was unoccupied. I am informed that it never has been occupied, and that no illness has occurred among the children since they have been resident at Snarebrook.

Seeing and hearing all this, on an occasion when I had taken the institution unawares, I felt convinced that the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum at Snarebrook was an admirably-managed institution. And I think it will be allowed that all the benefits to the poor orphans are secured with a strict regard to economy, when it is stated that the cost of maintenance of each child, including all house expenses, clothing, and education, is only about 22*l.* per annum.

I have only a word to add. The little boys of the band play on their flutes and fifes charmingly; but they are growing up, and their wind is improving, and they aspire to add a little 'brass' to the band. Will any one, with sympathy for the sailor's orphan and a soul for music, step forward with a few cornets, a horn or two, and a trombone? The sailor's orphan has claims upon us all. We never sit down to a meal but we enjoy some produce of a foreign land, which the sailor brings to us from across the sea, always at the peril of his life, and at the risk of his children's bread.

A. H.



## ALONE AND TOWN-TIED.



ENDORSE with hearty approval the sentiments about solitude, attributed to the late Mr. Selkirk, of St. Juan Fernandez, 'monarch of all he surveyed,' &c., &c.; and in a Selkirkian spirit I, a solitary, have been these four weeks past asking of solitude the strictly personal home question, where are the charms reported to be found on its face. How lovely has solitude appeared after a day-long wrangle in a crowded court—the morning after a heavy wine party—the moment after the burst and dispersion of a domestic storm—after escape from an imminent danger—after hearing of some unexpected success—when savage with self and everybody else—when a fit of indigestion had to be got over, or a quantity of real work to be got through.

At such times solitude has come out easily chief, without superior, without equal. On such occasions I have seen it fairer than the fairest.

Out of the fold in which I have been penned—do not smile, reader, or think of the wolf who dressed in a sheep's fleece—for six anxious hours, my mind on tenter-hooks, and intent on a case bristling with 'points,' watching with painful eagerness for the coming thrust of my opponent, looking each minute for the 'learned' and 'friendly' fling which my 'learned friend' on the other side desired to give me; weary of standing, volumes of Reports in hand, to be badgered by four experts, and answer their strange questions in succession, at the same time that my mental eye has had to be kept on that of my opponent, and my ear open to the meaningless babbling of the second junior, when the hour has chimed for the Inquisitors to cease from racking; and I have felt free to forget the whole jargon of the law, until sixteen hours shall have

gone away; when I have got back to my room, which solitude shares with me, and have in his voiceless company enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of being unspoken to, then I have seen beauties in solitude which I am bound in honour to mention. On solitude after a 'wine' I will not stop to dwell; I leave the question to it and soda-water which is the greater; and of the other occasions it were over long to write.

Suffice it, if I have shown that solitude is not without its attractions. It must, however, be conceded that these attractions are strictly evanescent, gifted though they may be with the power of reproducing themselves; and that when the occasion which has made them appear has passed away, they also become as unsubstantial as the figures in a magic lantern. Take away the slide, and you have nothing but the blank sheet with its white moon face to stare at. I take it, the opportunity which Mr. Selkirk had of discovering solitude's charms was unfavourable as he seems to have found it. Without feeling so much oppressed by the society of his fellows as to desire that he and they might 'be better strangers,' without that vexedness of spirit which I have suggested the badgered lawyer feels, and which makes a temporary companionship with solitude a most refreshing one; without the faculty of making comrades out of airy nothings, or of the fancies born of his own imagination, he was forced suddenly into the society of his own actual self, and, more thoroughly than the hero (?) of the 'London Journal,' was he 'left alone.' The curiosity begotten by the novelty of his situation once got rid of; his gregarious yearnings daily growing stronger and stronger; and the desolation of his forced exile becoming hourly more apparent, he must indeed have criticized with heartfelt severity every individual trait of his 'unwelcome guest.'

It is small wonder that he found them all ugly, and in the boldness of his despair put the strong personal question which is reported of him. There is much excuse for him if he asserted that the sages unnamed talked twaddle; or even if he went further, and hinted, in the absence of charity, at the way beyond his reach, in which these sages made their so-called solitude endurable. Having said enough, and perhaps a trifle over, to show that under certain circumstances Mr. Selkirk's question is pure slander, I feel warranted in saying that in the main the slander is justifiable. I began by stating that I heartily endorsed his sentiments, and, with the above qualification, I do. My reasons for endorsing them spring, as I have also said, out of experiences of the last four weeks.

Reader, seated, it may be, in thy easy chair, digesting an unhurried breakfast, and enjoying in the fulness of thy leisure the unspeakable pleasure of a morning pipe; or rolling on thy back at ease in the sweet-scented field, through which the stream runneth which holds the trout thou wilt eat to-day at dinner; partridge-shooting reader; free, untown-tied readers of every sort, picture to yourselves the scene of my experiences; relish your freedom with a keener zest, and be thankful you are not as this scribbler, whose monastic melancholy you read of. Scene, London; a room 10 feet by 8, in Dull Court; a confusion of books and every sort of litter; the author, coatless and perspiring, seated at a table, writing, and engaged in an attempt to persuade himself that he is as comfortable as possible; and that he is enjoying the perfect quiet the vacation has brought.

The room in Dull Court is mine, reader; and I am he who is striving to make things pleasant to himself. The room is the same with that I have before mentioned as the place where, on occasions, solitude is entertained, and found to be so charming. The moderate dimensions of the room are encroached upon by lumber of many kinds. To the dusty tomes in bilious-looking leather an ample space is given; and, cheek-by-jowl with musty volumes which contain the body of the ancient law, stand serious-looking rows of comparatively light literature, including the works of the late Adam Smith, Montesquieu's 'Greatness of the Romans,' and the ere-while treasured, but now unread writings of Francis of Verulam. Next come the later books on newer law, elbowing their companions of the more ancient order in most unseemly

fashion. With what scorn, by the way, must old Father Antic look upon his youngest son, now entered on his father's inheritance! With what contempt must the case which Lord Eldon reviewed for twenty years before he gave judgment, look out from the pages where its long life is recorded, upon a suit whose existence from writ to judgment has not extended over more than five weeks. How vulgar to a cause on which two entire fortunes were spent, must a modern suit appear; and who know so well as the suitors how much even modern suits cost? Cases whose names are encircled with a glory of terms which are simply incomprehensible to the new pretenders, who were familiar with 'exigent de novo,' and 'cognizance de droit,' with Jeofails and Fleemesuit, 'mulier, puisne,' and the 'scisin which fed contingent uses;' how must they look with feudal scorn upon the plain, unlearned creatures to whom even John Doe and Richard Roe are historical personages. Peace to their ashes, though they 'misused the king's press damnably!' it must be punishment enough, without our invoking more, if the framers of these suits have gone whither their works can follow them.

In the corner opposite to where these old decrees stand—I bought them by the yard, for the same purpose that Romeo's apothecary bought his cakes of roses and the empty boxes, to make up a show—is a case which holds the books that once were my chief delight. They contain no hint of law, argue nothing, are not precise; they are fit 'companions of my solitude,' ashamed though I seem to be of them by hiding them behind the curtained glass covers of the bookcase. I treasure them rather for the long friendship that has been between us, and for the past pleasures they have yielded, than for present use. The time required by the scramble after place and pelf has withdrawn me from communion with these. The languages some of them speak make them sealed books to my slippery memory. A table, four chairs, a rickety settee, and a washstand, once self-containing, but now as unable as my laundress to keep its own secrets, make up the furnishings, if collections of dusty papers and the tied-up troubles of suitors now at peace be added. The wall over the fire-place is ornamented by an almanac issued gratuitously by a life insurance office; and a table of the sittings of the courts in last term, beautified around the margins by portraits of the judges, from the pen of my constant visitor and friendly time-killer, Charles R—.

The bell which is wont to summon the lad in whom I have a joint ownership, and who is now on his holiday outing, stands mute and musicless; the lamp, with its glass broken on one side, shows signs of its need of renewal, and the establishment in general seems to stand in sad want of a 'refresher.'

Here with solitude have I kept company during four mortal weeks; finding even in solitude more companionship than in the crowd of folk unknowing and unknown to me, who live and breathe in the great world outside. The sentiment is not novel, but certainly most true, that a great city is a great solitude. One walks through it, and as at this season of the year especially, finds no one with whom to divide his thoughts. Crowds there are surging through the streets, thousands of people passing and repassing, with whom he has nothing but humanity in common. He cannot speak to them but on the footing of new acquaintance; must sound his way into their character; and be on his guard against strange habits and tendencies; maybe he falls in with a man who has a ridiculously small estimate of the crime of homicide, which he may at any moment be forced to know more thoroughly to his disadvantage. There must be heaps of fine creatures whom to know would be great gain, amongst the thousands now in that hot Strand; but they are utterly past finding out, except under conditions which cannot be complied with, introduction, mutual knowledge of each other, studying of character, &c., &c. To me they are as heathen men and publicans; if I desired to know them I could not do so. But I do not desire it; 'I have friends, and kinder friends has no man,' men whose adoption tried has made me grapple them to my soul with hooks of steel; and there is no room in my affection for more to come in. But they, more sensible than I, have left their haunts full four weeks ago, and I seek their rooms in vain if I attempt to see them. J. is shooting; D. is getting married; R. is climbing mountains; W. is rowing up the Thames. On R.'s local habitation is his name, printed in letters large enough to typify his expectations of professional success. The black door is closed in grim inhospitality; a notice gummed over the letter-hole bids whomsoever will be so incautious, put papers through the door, and announces that Mr. R. will return in the middle of October. I walked up the stairs in the hope of finding R., whom I thought to be a detenu like myself; the notice on the door was the

answer my expectation received. I smiled at the vanity, as I called it, which made R. imagine that anybody would have papers to leave for him, or, having them, would be imprudent enough to obey the words of the written order; and then walked down again, the stairs creaking and echoing as stairs in empty houses only can, into the court, and so to W.'s chambers. The 'oak' not sported; sounds of some one within. W. is in town. Here, at all events, is a friend to talk with. With the strong excitement which a man in long vacation feels on finding some supposed absentee suddenly turning up, I give a vigorous rap on the knocker, accompanying the action by the peculiar freemason-like sort of sign, by which I am wont to convey to W. that I, not Mr. Timmins' foreman, subtle in accounts, is the applicant for admission. The sound of life within ceases; a jingle of glass which, as I fancied, my ear caught a moment ago is heard no more; a step whose name is unwilling falls upon the passage which leads, as I know, to W.'s own room, and the inner door within the oak is slowly opened.

Behold, not W., but W.'s clerk, whose face brightens up when he finds that the door-hammerer is not his master, but myself. The silence, almost awful, which prevailed in the inner chamber, whence the jingle of glass and the trol of a song had given, but now, hints of occupants, suddenly gives way before some piece of clerical wit; and W.'s clerk, age about 15, feels bound to volunteer, as explanation of the same, that Mr. W. being away, he had taken the liberty of asking a few friends to spend the evening. W. is not in town then; his clerk keeps carnival, *anglicè*, High Jinks, in his chambers; and the place where 'opinions' were formed, and 'cases' concocted, interrogatories drawn, and pleas pleaded, is now in possession of clerical jollity; where the 'spirit of the laws' reigned but lately, the gatherings of Long John now hold sway. A wiser and a sadder man, I go back in the gloaming to my chamber, and sit a full hour, puffing furiously at my pipe. The work which had kept me in town when all else had fled, lay in many sheets upon the table, waiting but for a few closing words to take rank among the labours done. Solitude, which had helped me so much in the doing of it, is still with me; and now that I have got the utmost I can out of it, I begin to turn myself from it, like an ungrateful man, with indifference if not with loathing. I picture to myself the absentees of whose doings I have



spoken; the pleasures and delights they are getting out of holiday, and think how wise they are to enjoy the life while they have it. The scenes in which they are moving, and the kindly faces which I know beam around them rise to my mind's eye; and as they do so they crowd out the small field which lies immediately before it, so that the room 10 feet by 8 is not nearly large enough to hold them. There, in the corner where the favourite books stand, I see W., looking healthy and jolly, as he pulls with vigorous strokes past Winter Hill and Bisham Woods on his voyage to Marlow town; the lovely trees of Bisham drop into the water, where lately the almanac published gratuitously by the insurance office alone met my view; and, under the ledge of the mantelshelf, behold trouble-saving O. lies on his back in the bottom of his boat, the blue smoke curling upwards from the pipe-holding lips, while Fanny and Nelly Walters paddle his laziness's boat along. By the door, on the left of the ancient law books, see R. sweltering up the hitherto unscaled Toothpickhorn, enjoying the contrast between his present occupation and the sedentary life he leads for eleven months in the year; feeling, in addition to the honour which his painstaking pleasure will yield him at the next meeting of the Alpine Club, the perpetual satisfaction which must be inseparable from these high ascents, of dangers ever present and successively overcome. As he scrambles (Mr. Guido Balmat with him) from crag to crag, his appetite for the toil increasing by indulgence, tenant in tail, and common recoverer, vouchers to warrantry et hoc genus omne, wake up from their sleep of centuries, and stand up in the dusty sheets which have covered them over, to wonder at the marvellous performer who is exhibiting before them. What the impression made on them by the sight may be, it is not mine to know. They are speechless, dumb; Lord Brougham closed their mouths many years ago; so they cannot tell me what they think of it; but they are evidently astonished, not only by the act itself, but still more by the assurance that the actor is one who yet distinct from those who years ago coined the strange names they bear, and cut out the curiously cumbersome garments in which they are clothed.

I point out to solitude these things of life and movement, and intend it to say they are lovely and enjoyable. Perhaps it was too much to expect of it; it could not be supposed to be enchanted with anything so bustling; it waited long before making any answer, and then, as an Irish witness once told me, in giving an account of a conversation, he said nothing. I became angry, for the mental pictures I had seen had given me a hankering after society, which I had not before felt; and hence came it that the difference between solitude and myself grew to so great a head that I found myself adopting the Selkirkian impertinence, and asking poor solitude to show up its charms, if it had any.

I lighted the candles, and sat down to finish my task. The pictures I had seen, though they vanished before Messrs. Price and Co.'s burning wicks, had left an impression on my mind which was not to be got rid of. I resolved to be as unceremonious to my companion as Hamlet was to Polonius, and forthwith to quit his society; and away rushed my pen in all the agony of a driven quill, over the fair paper which its points marred, till that which was wanting to the work had been supplied, and the whole was ready for gracious Mr. —'s hands. As if to show that it resented the breach of friendship, solitude called upon its allies to be indignant; and, accordingly, all that night, as I wore it away in writing, did the wainscot creak, and windows lend themselves to sighing winds; the door, which I thought hasped, came open of its own accord; shapeless things, without substance, darted across the floor; and more than once I stopped to assure myself I had not heard a groan. The enemy did not beat me, though when the door fell open, my stock of courage, seriously damaged by indigestion and over-use of tobacco, showed signs of faltering. I finished my task, and rejoiced over the work and labour done; and next morning the 9-15 train whirled me away from Paddington into the beautiful west, where it is my great delight to be; and where at this moment I can see, without searching for them, charms in the face of my three-year old little niece, greater, infinitely greater, than the whole family of solitude can show.

## A STROLL IN BALDWIN'S GARDENS.

THERE is nothing essentially picturesque either in poverty or in crime; and yet it is so common a matter to read of both from a romantic point of view, or to regard either of them through a highly-coloured medium, that the very words, 'lowest portion of the metropolis,' or 'thief London,' seem to suggest something quite away from ordinary experience, and belonging to an existence mysterious and unapproachable, except by the few people who have made it their business to visit 'the dens' in which it is concealed. It is not a little remarkable that whenever we come upon these phrases, even though they may refer to some locality with which we are tolerably familiar, we seem all at once to place the scene at an imaginary distance, and almost fail to recognize in the name of the district the rows of shabby, wretched tenements past which we have for years been in the habit of making 'short cuts' to the broader and more respectable thoroughfares.

It is seldom that romantic or picturesque associations lend an interest to the great mass of wretchedness which lies only half hidden in the London slums. Apart from the terrible records of human suffering which should of themselves be sufficient to move us to compassion, the wonderful varieties of poverty, and the strange outward differences in the mode of life displayed by the poor in the widely-separated districts which they occupy, are more truly interesting than any merely ideal condition with which they have been associated.

It is the sense of this expectation of this picturesque, or rather, as the French would say, this *bizarre* element on the part of their readers, which renders it so difficult for newspaper or magazine writers to describe such a place, say, as Bethnal Green, where poverty presents a dead level of wretchedness, varied only by slight degrees. The merely verbal difficulty of avoiding the constant recurrence of the same expressions to denote the utter misery of

a neighbourhood is in itself considerable; and in order to secure the public attention the writer must present two or three of the most vivid examples, and honestly endeavour to describe what he sees without allowing any supposed desire for the sensational to influence his judgment.

It is after a visit to the parish just referred to, and deeply impressed with the truth that this weary monotony of dirt and hunger and sickness is the very best proof of the utter destitution of any neighbourhood, that I find myself strolling towards Baldwin's Gardens. The road to Baldwin's Gardens lies between banks of vegetables—cabbages, turnips, carrots, potatoes, and a few (but not many) cauliflowers, and sheep and oxen are displayed in fair proportions at the wayside. To speak of 'strolling,' as I more nearly approach my destination, would be to preserve a fiction for which there is no longer any pretence, since I am hustled hither and thither by a miscellaneous crowd of people representing several distinct nationalities, only a few of whom have any present business with Baldwin's Gardens, but most of whom are busily engaged with the agricultural produce alluded to. The specimens of vegetation are, in fact, piled on stalls or in the long hand-barrows known as 'Whitechapel broughams;' and the animal creation has been reduced to the condition of joints, which hang in bewildering variety outside butchers' shops where the flaring gas-jets whistle a lively accompaniment to the Babel of sounds by which I am surrounded. For my visit to Baldwin's Gardens is made on a Saturday night, and my most direct road is by way of Leather Lane.

I have entered quietly enough by the narrow inlet from Holborn, where I stayed to look at the plaster images standing so cold under the pale gas-light, and to wonder whether a customer would ever appear for the scorbutic doves who have



Drawn by W. McCandless

### SATURDAY NIGHT IN LEATHER LANE

[See "A Week in England" column]





Drawn by W. McConnell.]

### SATURDAY NIGHT IN LEATHER LANE.

[See "A Stroll in Baldwin's Gardens."

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and its history is therefore a history of growth and development. The second is the fact that the United States is a large nation, and its history is therefore a history of expansion and conquest. The third is the fact that the United States is a diverse nation, and its history is therefore a history of conflict and compromise. The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and its history is therefore a history of assimilation and adaptation. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of pioneers, and its history is therefore a history of exploration and discovery. The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of inventors, and its history is therefore a history of innovation and progress. The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of entrepreneurs, and its history is therefore a history of risk-taking and achievement. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of leaders, and its history is therefore a history of vision and inspiration. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of heroes, and its history is therefore a history of courage and sacrifice. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of dreamers, and its history is therefore a history of hope and aspiration.



been so long in flying that now they would be all the better for a good Saturday's scrubbing with soap and water. But this apparent quietude is the peculiarity of Holborn byeways. Of all the neighbourhoods in London these poor districts lying on either side of the great thoroughfare from Newgate to Tyburn are the strangest and the most various; and it is here that we see most distinctly how our 'vast improvements' fail to make a clean sweep, serving at best only to expose the sordid ravellings of that foul tangle of courts and alleys which they were intended to destroy. Starting from the eastern end, where Newgate Gaol has cast its prison blight upon the foul and melancholy dwellings of Snow Hill, we find that the operation which was to have removed Field Lane has but left a great ugly scar, and has at the same time revealed fresh evils in the ends and corners of half-dilapidated houses and frowsy taverns where even dissipation languishes, and from which the very betting men who assemble periodically in the ruinous space depart for more cheerful accommodation. At its western extremity New Oxford Street has failed to remove the vestiges of St. Giles's; and only a few paces from the fashionable library the children still play at mud-pies; while from garret to cellar the foul houses teem with inmates whose half-washed rags flutter from lines stretched across the street.

It is between these two points that the strangest part of all this great city may be discovered, on one side amidst the Inns of Court, on the other in that maze of streets and alleys to which Leather Lane is an approach. Not that poverty here is altogether of that dead, hopeless kind which is so terrible a peculiarity of the wretchedness of some other neighbourhoods. From quiet Hatton Garden, where, by a strangely poetical accident, the City Orthopædic Hospital occupies the site of the Chancellor's mansion, and the portrait of his dancing lady looks down from the chimney-piece of the Board-room upon restored cripples;—from Hatton Garden, round by

Hatton Wall, and along the wider streets, there may be seen no little bustle even on ordinary week-days, and most of the people there seem to follow some poor calling which enables them to support the hucksters, who ply their trades briskly enough.

Beyond and behind these streets, however, there are close and foul dwellings indeed—tenements let and underlet to scores of lodgers who crowd from garret to basement. First there is the colony of Italian organ-grinders and hurdy-gurdy players, whose head-quarters lie here, and some of whom may be seen toiling wearily home at nightfall from their long day's journey round the suburbs, to deposit their instruments and pay the daily sum demanded either by the master who farms the men or for the hire of their organs. Dark-eyed, stubble-chinned, slouching, often half idiotic, these poor fellows lead a life which surely for monotonous misery could scarcely be surpassed; a few of them are cheerful-looking, but these generally own an organ of their own—a very different case to that of the wretched drudges who are compelled to pay an exorbitant day's hire before they can devour their coarse and scanty supper, and huddle to sleep in their miserable beds.

Then there are itinerant Dutch clock-makers, the German glaziers, the image boys, the plaster-cast makers and modellers, and the Irish of many callings, who swarm in the alleys, and whose lively brogue may be heard at the street corners like the rattling of shillelaghs. The most extraordinary tenements, however, are one or two dilapidated inns which stand, or, rather, which continue to fall, in certain obscure corners lying near the lane itself. They are the remains of the most ruinous old hostelries ever seen in or out of London, their steps sinking from the battered doorways which formerly led to the gloomy bar where the lady in cherry-coloured ribbons once guarded the punch-bowls and big-labelled bottles while she scored the potations of now defunct bagmen on a dingy

slate. That bar is now tenanted by a red-armed woman in a mob-cap, and an atmosphere of suds; and the coffee-room, where even the greasy odour of past dinners has faded from the blackened walls, and the situation of the 'boxes' is only just indicated by marks upon the floor, is in the occupation of a family, or, perhaps, to judge from their numbers, a couple of families. The private sitting-rooms, the bed-rooms, the half-glazed closet in which the 'boots,' who was also the night-porter, consorted with six flat candlesticks and the blacking-brushes, all, all have been converted into separate lodgings; the gallery, which looks over the space formerly the resort of fast coaches and covered waggons, supports clothes-lines on which dingy garments hang to dry and grow more dingy still; the whole place is so broken, dirty, and dismantled, that the freshly-plastered hotel at a new Railway Station could scarcely exert a more depressing influence.

Even before I have noted these things the uproar in the streets has increased, and the Saturday night's market has commenced in earnest. The great heaps of vegetables are only exceeded by the attractions of the stalls of tin-ware, which flash and glitter under the gaslight of the shops in a way completely dazzling. For the rest, there is an evident tendency on the part of Leather Lane to cheap haberdashery and small hosiery, while second-hand boots, odd pieces of floor-cloth, penny toys, and common crockery-ware alternate with fresh and cured fish in attracting the crowd of customers.

The shopkeepers scarcely seem to object to the hucksters, though they are often in the same line of business—for it would seem that they each have their different classes of purchasers—and to hear the tempting offers made by many of these poor dealers at once suggests how far a little money is compelled to go amongst them. Who does not remember De Quincey's description of his Saturday evening rambles in Clare Market, assisting the poor people to make their purchases?

Fancy the gentle, scholarly 'Opium-eater' exerting that rare conversational power of his, which charmed the select circles of the most literary capital in Europe, upon an obdurate Cockney butcher to cheapen a neck of mutton for some poor woman!

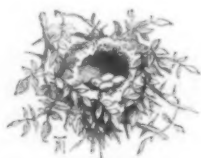
The second-hand clothes, and such general articles as form the sweepings of sales where pawnbrokers' 'unredeemed' pledges are disposed of, are, perhaps, no inconsiderable part of the trade of Leather Lane, though they are confined to only one or two dirty cavernous shops, where nothing seems to have been disturbed from the dust of ages which has settled there. Perhaps the most remarkable stall in the neighbourhood, however, is that devoted to the sale of books, which cover a couple of long boarded barrows at the corner of a street. What have illuminated gift-books, gilded albums in morocco and toned paper, and those handsomely-bound volumes 'without which no gentleman's library can be considered complete,' to do with such a neighbourhood as this? Yet here they are, no doubt cheaply purchased at the publishers' clearing sales, and destined to find their way to the book-cases of the more prosperous tradespeople, or to the shelves of such students as take Leather Lane in the line of their daily peregrinations.

Deeply meditating on this phenomenon, however, I find the place of which I am in search, and a dull and squalid place it is. The houses (of which I observe one is a parochial or district school), faded far beyond the last promise of respectability, bear at first sight so strong a resemblance to some of the depressed buildings in Bethnal Green in the quiet wretchedness of their brick and mortar features, that I am almost ready to return to the cheerful bustle of the poor mart I have left behind, and whose clamour is still audible in those strange surges of sound which denote the vicinity of a crowd. I have arrived, however, at an iron railing, within which a newer and altogether different edifice is indicated; not that I can see more of it than a paved court-yard and an unpretentious

porch; but I have caught a glimpse of its larger proportions—such of them as are not wholly concealed by surrounding houses—during my journey. There is just sufficient light at the entrance to enable me to decipher the inscription on a black board, which in ecclesiastical text informs me that this is the Church of St. Alban the Martyr, and that, beside the Sunday services, it is open every morning and evening for public worship, as well as on some extra occasions there fully set down, *whilst the church itself is open all day long.* As I stoop, from beneath the folds of the curtain which hangs at that porch the distant tumult is heard no more; the squalid poverty surrounding Baldwin's Gardens is shut out, and for a moment forgotten;—forgotten—not that the poor have no part in the scene upon which I have entered, but because of the holy quiet and purity of this free church, which has been given as a blessed heritage for the people of the surrounding districts.

Standing there reverently, and looking upward to that high roof—its graceful arches so suggestive of a purer and serener air—gazing towards the chancel and paintings which decorate its lofty walls—listening with strange emotion to the full swell of the organ, which, as there are no galleries, is placed near the communion space itself, and so seems to have come down to help the congregation in their brother-

liness of Christian worship, I seem to recognize an influence which has resulted from the truest appreciation of what a true church is intended to effect. Who does not remember the pathetic verses in which James Smith (one of the authors of 'Rejected Addresses') inquires why the churches, which are the property of the people, should be barred to them on week-days, when even the mere visit to the holy place might bring peaceful and penitent thoughts to some amongst the weary and heavy-laden. I think of this, and of the story of that poor, wretched man stained with many crimes, who at length came back to his native place, and creeping stealthily to the church there, sat beneath the painted window, its rays falling on the pavement at his feet, and thought, with bitter repentance and earnest unutterable pleadings, of his wild and wicked life, till he went peacefully to sleep as the golden sunset fell upon him, and so died smiling with the look of childhood on his face. Of both of these I think fitfully, but gravely, after I have once more passed that curtain at the porch of St. Alban the Martyr, and again emerge into the roar and bustle of Leather Lane on that Saturday night. There are flowers of promise even in the wild waste of Baldwin's Gardens; and in that Holy Rood which it encloses, much fruit may be ripening for the gathering in of the Great Harvest.



## O, DON'T BECOME A NUN, MY DEAR.

[On seeing a young lady at a fancy ball in the costume of a Sister of Charity.]

## I.

O DON'T you become a nun, my dear,  
 But leave your beauty free;—  
 Of vows pr'ythee make but one, my dear,  
 And make that one to me!  
 Whenever you wish to 'confess,' my dear,  
 Be this tender heart your shrine;  
 For you never will find, I guess, my dear,  
 So loving a heart as mine!

## II.

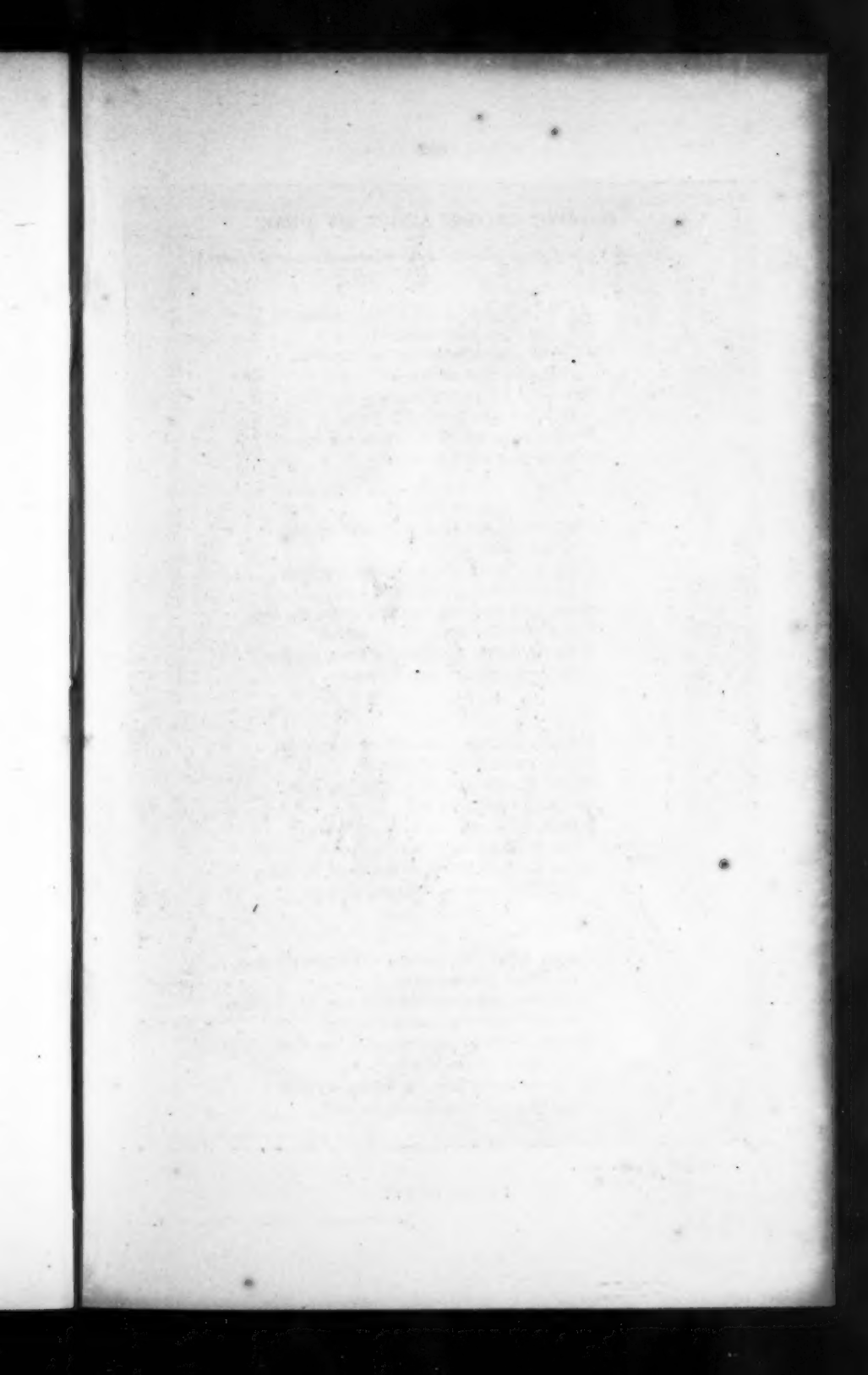
They tell me you want to become, my dear,  
 A Sister of Charity;  
 But before you set off from home, my dear,  
 Let your mission begin with me!  
 Though the wounded limb may smart, my dear,  
 And the pulse be too wildly stirred,  
 What are they to the wounded heart, my dear,  
 Or the sickness of hope deferred!

## III.

Then, howe'er you incline to roam, my dear,  
 Don't forget that your charity  
 Should sometimes begin at home, my dear,  
 So let it begin with me!  
 If Indulgences ever you need, my dear,  
 You have only how many to say,  
 And if blessings your bliss can speed, my dear,  
 You'll be happy by night and by day!

## IV.

E'en the world with its cares and strifes, my dear,  
 Is a school it is easy to see,  
 And if vows you would make for your life, my dear,  
 Pr'ythee make them at once to me!  
 The bliss for which oftenest I sigh, my dear!  
 Is to thine my fate to tether,  
 To live on, in one faith, till we die, my dear,  
 And then travel to Heaven together.





Drawn by M. Ellen Edwards.

**DANGEROUS!**

[See "The Ordeal for Wives," Chap. XXXV.



## THE ORDEAL FOR WIVES.

A Story of London Life.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE MORALS OF MAYFAIR.'

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

DOUBLY FALSE.



RS. SCOTT and Miss Dashwood had gone out to a dinner-party, and would not be at home till eleven, was the welcome that awaited Esther in her new home. Would Miss Fleming have the goodness to go upstairs at once, and have her tea in Miss Natty's nursery?

Miss Natty's nursery—so Mr. Scott willed it—was the best room in the

house; and on entering it Esther at once saw, in the minute appointments, the pictured walls, the costly carpeted floor, that some one had Miss Natty's personal comforts at heart. Was it her stepmother? As she looked round for the little baby face she had prepared herself to see, a small woman—a woman, judging from her height, of about four years old, but with cool, worldly manners, and a firm, unembarrassed step—approached from a low chair by the fireside, and extended to her its minute hand.

'Mrs. Scott and Miss Dashwood are out. Come near the fire; you must be frozen after your long journey.'

And then two sharp black eyes commenced a deliberate inventory of every detail of Miss Fleming's dress, of every line of her face; an inventory such as only one of these terrible children can take; and which, while the victim is ashamed visibly to writhe under it, he feels to be more remorselessly correct than any which a grown man or woman, with ever so much knowledge of the world, would have the capacity to take.

'I hope you will love me, Natty, dear. I am quite prepared to love you.'

Miss Scott gave a short laugh; a laugh not in the slightest degree ill-bred, but such a one as you might imagine some very used-up cynic bestowing upon a ludicrously-gushing, although possibly good-hearted, country gentleman who should proffer the tender to him of eternal friendship.

'I like all the world, Mademoiselle Fleming. We shall be the best of friends, I am sure.' And Natty looked between Esther's brows, and reading there more than she liked of determination, vowed to herself to kick her upon the earliest occasion when they should enter together upon the delicate intricacies of words in three letters. 'My dear mamma—ah, there are more than two years she is dead—taught me to love all the world. I don't remember her, mademoiselle; but I have seen—seen *où elle dort*, in Père la Chaise, and a little white boy, with only a chemise on, holding his hands so! above his head. The day before we left, you know, papa and I, he took me there, and it was very damp, and papa wouldn't step on the grass, and he walked up and down and he smoked, oh, a very long time—five minutes, *tout au moins*—on the gravel walk before mamma; and then I cried, and he took me to the bonbon shop, and gave me a boxful—a pink

box, with a real little looking-glass inside the lid, and such good bonbons avec de la crème, mademoiselle—how do you say it? crème inside the chocolats, and that lovely stuff that brings tears to your eyes, du rhum, n'est ce pas?—in the little rose and white dragées. Mademoiselle, have you been in Paris? I have been there four, five times, and in Vienna, too. Our courier in Vienna was—was allerliebst! Ah, bon Dieu, if I had only got poor Carl here!

And then the good temper vanished abruptly out of Natty's face, and she turned away with the air of one who evidently held life to be a very poor, mistaken, used-up affair, indeed, to the fire.

Jane Dashwood's letter had not prepared Esther to find an angel in Marmaduke Scott's child; but for anything so old, so knowing, so upsetting of all her early legends respecting childish innocence as this fraction of a human being, she was unprepared.

'I haven't been in Paris, Natty,' she remarked, when, later, they were sitting together at tea; the child quaintly doing the honours to the best of her small powers; 'I haven't been in Paris; but I have lived in a place that I'm sure you'd like a great deal better—a farmhouse in the country, with a garden, and under one of the trees in the garden a swing. What should you say to that?'

'I have swung in the Jardin Mabille, and it made me ill at my heart. It was Easter Sunday, and Carl took me there; and while he went to dance with Mademoiselle Zizine, a man took me up and called me his angel, and treated me to a swing—out of goodness, you understand—and it made me ill, like the steamer. I've been to a farmhouse, too. I've seen as much as you. A farmhouse at Hampstead, and Polly and I and a gentleman had strawberries and cream there. Va donc, mademoiselle! where else have you been?'

'To school, Natty; a place I'm sure you have not been to. I was at school with your mamma.'

'You mean Milly. She's not my mamma. Watson says so. My

mamma's in Père la Chaise; and it's a good thing for her; a very good thing!' Natty nodded her head significantly.

'Child, who teaches you to say such things?' Esther asked. 'Why is it a good thing that your mamma is dead?'

'She wouldn't be happy if she was alive. People ain't happy when they fight; and Watson told cook papa quarrelled with my real mamma just as bad as he does with this one. Every time they come from a party they quarrel—oh, they quarrel so that I heard them one night from my room; and Milly doesn't speak the truth to papa, Miss Fleming. One day she said Mr. Mortimer hadn't been here, and he had been here all the afternoon, and I told papa so—I did!' and about five small demons flashed out of Natty's eyes; 'Milly didn't dare punish me then, because of papa; but next day she came in the nursery and made Polly dress me in my old green frock, when Dick Lawson was coming to tea. I hate her for it, that I do; and when I'd a new white one, with a dear little blue ruche all round the skirt! and whenever Mr. Mortimer comes I'll tell papa again, that I will!'

To turn the child from herself, her own loves, her own hates, her own dresses, would have been simply as impossible as to have turned Milly Dashwood, in days gone by, from her loves, and hates, and dresses. For frivolity, for worldliness, for selfishness, Natty might have done perfect credit to Millicent as her own daughter; and, even while she launched forth her tiny shafts most bitterly against her step-mother, Esther could scarce forbear from smiling at the child's instinctive appreciation of all the leading and congenial points in Mrs. Scott's character. Natty was obviously not to be pitied, according to the old sentimental way of pitying step-children. It would, all her life, be a good stand-up fight between her and whosoever should be put in authority over her, just as it was virtually a stand-up fight now between Millicent and her husband.

'And well for her so!' thought

Esther, when she went, later, to look at the child asleep, and marked the resolute expression of the poor little round infantine features. 'Well for her, well for this little child, well for all women who have got it born in them not to suffer for any one, not to love any one but themselves.'

And then she betook herself to the window and leant her face against the pane, and tried to choke back her tears as she wondered how many miles Paul was from her at that moment? and with whom he was? and whether he had bought the bouquet of white flowers that day? with all the other questions which that delicious passion, under whose dominion she was, is in the habit of alternately fevering and chilling the hearts of its unhappy victims.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock the Scotts and Jane returned. As Mrs. Scott was very fatigued, however; had fainted, or intended to faint, or something of that kind; and Mr. Scott was in the sulky condition normal to him after all parties, Esther Fleming, much to her own relief, was informed that she would not be required to come down to the drawing-room that evening.

'Don't think it unkind,' cried Jane, who had rushed up at once, in her warm impulsive way, and borne Esther off to her own room. 'Milly really isn't strong—indeed, it would be much better for her if she didn't go to parties at all—and Mr. Scott is so fearfully cross, I don't wonder at her not wishing you to get your first impression of him to-night. Esther, whatever else Lord Feltham may turn out, I hope he won't be sulky. I could stand any other form of temper, but even from a man I didn't love I could not stand sulkiness. If Feltham takes it into his head to sulk like dear Marmy I shall run away from him in three months.'

'But is it real, Jane?' and Esther looked earnestly into her face. 'Is it all in real sober earnest? You are going to marry him?'

'Real! I should rather think so!' but her laugh was hollow. 'Wait till you see his letters, his trinkets.

Sober earnest? Oh, Esther, if you knew all I have had to go through—all that I go through still!'

She seized Esther's hand between her own two feverish ones, and kissed her in that passionate way which, coming from one woman to another, tells so indisputably that some strong emotion concerning a man must be the latent motive-power. 'I am glad you have come. I want you. I want some one that I need tell no lies to: some one that I can really talk to for the short time that will be mine about—about Arthur. Esther, I have seen him to-night. He knew I was to be at the Dalzells, and he actually walked round from his club, and met me at the door, as I was going to the carriage, this cold winter night! He doesn't come to the house, you know—Mr. Scott won't have it, horrible bear! now that I am engaged—but he meets me everywhere; when we walk, when we go out to parties, to the theatre. Do you think that looks as if he was going to marry Miss Lynes? Speak what you think, please, quite plainly. I'm accustomed to all disappointments.'

'I didn't know that Arthur Peel was even said to be engaged to Miss Lynes, Jane; but I think the fact of your being engaged should be enough to make him leave off paying you attention; and I think Mr. Scott acts honourably to Lord Feltham in not allowing him to come to the house.'

'Honourably!' cried Jane, with a little, hard laugh. 'What a word to apply to the thought or actions of any man, in as far as women are concerned! Vanity, selfishness, falseness—those are the qualities I recognise, only in different degrees, in all men. Mr. Scott is intensely selfish, and thinks it for his advantage, socially, that his sister-in-law should remain true to an eligible suitor. Lord Feltham is intensely vain, and vanity made him wish to be the owner of my well-looking face, and to cut Arthur out. For Arthur himself—'

She sank her head down, wearily, against the mantelpiece; and then, looking again at the lines of that lovely face in repose, Esther knew

that it had changed from what it used to be. Miss Dashwood had not grown thin to the point which takes from beauty. The round, fair cheek, the exquisitely-modelled chin and throat were there, in all the perfect softness that must belong to a blonde Englishwoman of less than two-and-twenty; and yet, despite all the brilliant bloom and rounded lines, the face *had* oldened visibly during the last twelve months. Of passion as strong as her nature could feel, Jane had had ample experience ever since she was seventeen; but, whatever some moralists may say, it is not passion, it is the renouncement of passion, which really hardens the heart and lines the face. Since her engagement, Jane Dashwood had striven to efface Arthur Peel from her heart; had striven, in her way, to be true to the man she meant to marry; and these two or three months of her engagement had made her older and more miserable than so many years of the former life, with all its excess of hopeless but unstruggling passion would have done.

'Jane, I think you have done very wrong in accepting Lord Feltham.'

'Esther, I have done very right in accepting Lord Feltham. Such a life as mine has been for the last three years *can't* go on for ever. Very few women marry the man they are insane enough to love first, and the few who do are not overhappy in their lives, I hear. I shall never marry Arthur Peel—never, never, never!' She raised up her face, and looked—oh, with what a look!—into Esther's eyes. 'It was a dream, and he was never worthy of me, and if I had married him both of us would have been miserable in six months. I know all that, and I know, too, that love—even the very maddest love—can't drag on through a divided existence for ever. One can live down everything, and the best way to live love down is by marrying. I am fortunate in being engaged to Feltham, because he has money—money and position, of both of which, as I grow older, I shall be fond; and, besides, if I had not married him I should

certainly have married some one else. *Lui ou un autre!*—it matters little. I shall be a good average wife; the better for knowing so well beforehand what life and all its temptations are; and you are very mistaken, Esther, in thinking that I have acted wrongly. Wait till you see me as Lord Feltham's wife, and then tell me whether he and I are not both to be envied.'

'And the conclusion of your letter to me, Jane, where you spoke of some poor wretch making her way through the night to the river, and said for very little you would change your fate with hers?'

Miss Dashwood laughed the question off; began to talk of Millicent's marriage, of Mr. Scott, of the child, of her own parties and successes—finally of Paul.

'You are as fatally far gone upon him as ever, Esther, I presume? If you are, I can look him up for you at once. You know, of course, that he and Lord Feltham are half-brothers?'

'Paul Chichester and Lord Feltham? Great heavens, Jane! are you in earnest?'

'Why, you don't mean to say you did not know it before? I took it for granted you did when I first wrote to announce my engagement. They are brothers, but have not met for years and years. One day, when I was talking to Lord Feltham, I mentioned Paul's name accidentally, and then out it all came. Amusing to have been engaged to them both, one in joke, the other in earnest, eh?'

All the story, the dark hints respecting Paul that Mrs. Tudor had given her at Weymouth, came back, sudden and clear, upon Esther's mind, and her heart died within her at this threatened confirmation of their truth.

'Are you quite sure the estrangement was all Paul's fault?' she stammered. 'Did Lord Feltham give you no details of the family quarrels?'

'Well, Esther, dear, to tell you the honest truth, I wasn't interested enough in anything belonging to them to ask many questions, even if I had thought it discreet to do so,

which I did not. When young men break with their relations in that determined sort of manner, 'tis not difficult to guess what kind of reason lies at the bottom of it all; indeed, Lord Feltham more than hinted that Paul had been entangled—hopelessly entangled—ever since, and was so now. I didn't like Paul a bit the less for it, mind, nor his brother the better for his look of conscious superiority as he told me; but it was in quite the early days of our engagement, when everything, of course, *must* be rose-coloured and charming, and as I saw the subject was not an agreeable one, I just said that I had known Mr. Chichester slightly, and let it drop.'

'And Paul—Mr. Chichester—did he and Lord Feltham ever meet in this house?'

'No. I happened to see Paul a night or two afterwards at the Opera—the only public place at which one ever meets him—and then I told him—Lord Feltham happily was not with me—of my engagement. From that day till this he has never been near the house, but now, with his brother away (I told you, did I not, that Lord Feltham had gone to Corfu? He does not sell out till the spring, and by my express wish rejoined his regiment in the interval) and with you here, no doubt we shall begin to see Paul's face again; that is, if dear Marmy should happen to approve of his visits. You have no idea what a jealous monster that is, Esther. Poor Milly has only got to speak to any man twice, and Mr. Scott insults him if he comes to the house. What should you do if you were married to such a wretch? I should simply run away, *coûte que coûte*. Life is too short to be spent in fighting any man.'

'Life is too short to be spent in loving any man!' cried Miss Fleming, bitterly. 'Jane, are all men unprincipled, I wonder, and all women fools?'

'Most undoubtedly they are, in their relations to each other,' said Miss Dashwood, with cool emphasis, 'and every year that you live you will come to know it with greater certainty. All men are unworthy—

wholly unworthy—of anything like true or honest love; all women are fools enough, once or twice in their lives, to be really in love, except, perhaps, women of the Mrs. Strangeways' stamp; and what they must go through in wounded vanity I dare say quite equals the torment of other people's foolish attachments. The happy state, I am convinced of it, Esther, is to be not one atom in love with the man you marry; for him to be fond—not ridiculously or jealously fond—of you, and also to possess a great taste and great capacity for constantly making you all sorts of nice expensive presents. This is my state now, and if I could only get over my old folly thoroughly, I should be really happy. Grandes passions were never really intended for silly little women like Milly and me. They require height, as these new wreaths do, to carry them off. By-the-way, what do you think of this tiara I have on? It is an awfully grand one, you must know, made out of some of the Feltham diamonds. Do you think a tiara coming so much to the front of the head becomes me or not?'

Now Esther was not one whit disposed to talk of wreaths or tiaras, or any other kind of head-dress. Her heart was bitter within her: bitter against Paul for the fresh confirmation of the guilty secret, whatever it was, that bound him to his strange and suspected life; bitter against him because he *had*, after all, been going to the Opera, living, enjoying himself as usual, while she had been wasting her heart in foolish dreams at Countisbury; bitter against him because—because she loved him. Can I assign to her any better reason? But when do women, the simplest, the worst-trained among them, betray to each other this particular phase of suffering—the first, the keenest, perhaps, of all: suspicion without the right to be suspicious; jealousy without the right to be jealous? She thought dear Jane looked very well indeed with a tiara coming so much to the front of the head; and what beautiful brilliants they were! and how well they contrasted with the sweet simplicity of

that little gold bracelet upon Jane's arm!

'The first present poor Arthur ever gave me!' cried Miss Dashwood. 'See, here's the date inside, and when you touch that spring, a little piece of his hair and of mine. Do you think it will be right for me to keep it when I am married? Right or wrong, I shall do so. There are some few things it would just kill me to part from, and this is one of them.'

She put the bracelet between Esther's hands, then walked up to the toilet-table, took off her tiara, her necklace, her rings, and pushed them all aside with a quick impatient gesture into a heap.

'I hope you'll never know the sensation of having sold yourself, Esther. It's not an elevating one. When I am dressed in Lord Feltham's jewels, and meet Arthur, as I did to-night, I ask myself how much better I am than any of the women of another class whom we have been taught to regard as lost, in this world and the next? My sale is for life, certainly; but I don't see that the length of the term can make any moral difference. The sale—the motives of the sale—remain the same.'

'No, no, Jane; that is your passionate, one-sided way of viewing your own conduct. You intend, once married to Lord Feltham, to be true and faithful to him, and to banish Arthur Peel from your heart. If you did not really at heart mean to be true, to the best of your ability, your conscience would not prick you as it does about this little bracelet. No one who was going to do a very great wrong could be troubled by the thought of a small infidelity.'

Miss Dashwood made no answer. Possibly she thought Esther's arguments weak; possibly she thought the whole subject one of those which do not gain much by ventilation. 'I think I am very selfish in keeping you up after your long journey,' she began, when both had remained silent for some minutes; 'but before we say good-night, there is just one thing I should like to tell you—something about Lord

Feltham. Would you mind staying one quarter of an hour longer to hear it?'

'No; I would like to stay. This arm-chair and warm fire make me disinclined to go away. Has it anything to do—I mean, has it any—any connection with Paul Chichester?'

'None at all, Esther.' And Miss Dashwood came and put her hand kindly round the girl's neck. 'Let me give you a bit of very sincere advice—don't love Paul. When he first went away from me to you in Bath, I was a little bit jealous; I don't mind confessing it; and that hindered me, perhaps, from warning you as heartily as I ought to have done about the danger you ran in being intimate with him. He can never marry; he has told me so himself; others, his own brother even, have told me that he is irrevocably bound for life. Why should you care for him? You are young, you are handsome, the world is full of people who only need to know you to like you. Why should you go and fix your heart upon a broken-down, penniless man like Paul Chichester? These things can't be undone afterwards, Esther; the outset is the time for the struggle. Resolutely keep your mind from Paul. When his face, when his voice *will* come before you, get up, read, talk, rush away out of the room, out of the house, anything to escape from yourself. It is not the man himself, you know, it is your own imagination that makes you in love up to a certain point—the point after which no effort can save you any more! Esther, you are too good to waste your life as I have done. Take my advice. I am as old as a woman of thirty in everything to do with the bitter folly of love. Take my advice; give up thinking of Paul. He is not worthy of you!'

'I don't want him to be worthy,' said Esther; but she shielded the firelight away nervously with her hands. 'He is no more to me than any other man. I am going to teach little Natty; I am going, heart and soul, to attend to my duties. No fear of my dreaming of him or of any one else; I shall have no



time. And, besides, Mr. Chichester does not care one atom for me. He liked me as a man of that age might like an unformed, plain, country girl at Bath, nothing more. It is nearly a year since I saw him, and he hasn't even written me one line in all these weary months.'

And then her voice stopped with singular unphilosophical abruptness, and the great tears gathered slowly in her eyes.

Miss Dashwood looked at her with genuine pity. To her—and she really had had ample experience—no possible misery could be so great for a woman as to love without fortune. Even while she was mad enough still to care for Arthur Peel, all her opinions respecting love were cynical, hard, worldly, as Milly's. She had no belief in the worthiness of any man. Of Paul Chichester's real character she could not form half so true an estimate as Esther, in her innate childish longing to believe in another's goodness, had done. He was poor, embarrassed, living on evil terms with his family—what should make him thus but the same class of selfish vices of which she had seen so many samples among the Peels and dozens of others? All men, according to the Dashwood creed, were vicious; all men were natural enemies; to be vanquished and discomfited by all weapons, and with the least possible risk to the vanquisher. And Jane had enough *esprit de corps*—perhaps enough real generosity—to feel genuine regret as she looked in Esther's face and read there that one who should have been a victor was already among the ranks of the slain. Lost far more irrevocably than she had been with all her love and madness for Arthur. For Esther she dimly and yet intuitively felt was a woman who would love for life!

She had too much knowledge to launch another direct shaft against Paul; but as the tears slowly swept away from Esther's eyes she began to speak of Lord Feltham; and to speak of any man was, in Miss Dashwood's present mood, to denounce the whole race as false, unworthy, perjured.

'Before I had been engaged to him a week, he began, with the accustomed fine sense of honour of men, to tell me of his last love-affair, and of all that it had cost—not himself, but his beloved—when the affair was broken off. It is about this that I want to tell you, Esther, just to hear what idea you take from it of my *fiancé's* character. She was a most worthy person, according to his making out; one, I am sure, far more likely to suit him than I shall ever be—sincere, simple, outspoken: something, I should fancy, both in mind and face, like yourself, Esther.'

Esther looked up quickly. The very idea was void of reason, and yet—and yet a sharp pang of suspicion did, involuntarily, contract her heart.

'And where was the first romance acted out, Jane? Who was this simple, sincere, outspoken person, of whom you are the successor?'

'Oh, those were just the things he would not tell me,' replied Miss Dashwood. 'It all took place about a year and a half ago—the summer before last, I think. He went to some wild country place for fishing—in Wales, I believe—and met a well-looking young farmer's daughter one morning gazing at herself in a stream, and she fell in love with him on the spot—this part, naturally, was shadowed forth rather than put into words—and then all the commonplace story followed, as a matter of course.'

'And the farmer's daughter offered to marry him, I suppose?' suggested Miss Fleming; but as she spoke she turned her face quickly away into shadow. 'And out of sheer pity he was forced to consent. Is that the end of the story?'

'Well, not exactly. No man, even as vain a one as Feltham, has the face quite to make such an assertion as that; it carries its falsehood written too palpably upon the surface. The farmer's daughter was wildly, passionately in love, and carried away by country air and compassion, his lordship, in a rash moment, asked her to become his wife.'

'What a noble piece of generosity!'

'Then came the parting. He was ordered away suddenly to join his regiment, which was supposed to be under orders for India (pity it has not gone there, Esther! I believe, at this moment, I could get up a little morsel of sentiment about him, if I thought he was being killed upon a field of battle instead of snipe-shooting at Corfu), and the poor disconsolate Phillis was left to mourn. Well, can you guess what first began to wake him to his folly? Not meeting some one worthier of him, not calmly reasoning over his weakness, but the poor girl's own letters.'

Esther gave one little instinctive start of surprise. 'They were badly spelt, no doubt,' she cried. 'The faulty orthography revolted against Lord Feltham's delicate sense of refinement.'

'That's what I thought, and I asked him to show me one.'

'Go on, Jane.'

'And he refused to do so. How interested you look, Esther! Have you got to that point in which any account of men's small basenesses has especial interest for you? I sincerely hope not. It would not be exactly honourable, you know, to show one woman's love-letters to another, although it is perfectly honourable to boast of having gained, then cast aside, her heart. However, though he did not—most probably could not—produce them, Lord Feltham was able to give me a very fair idea of the nature of his first love-letters. He gets none such from me, I can answer for it.'

'So badly expressed, do you mean?'

'So full of generous feeling, of honest confidence, Esther. Little though he meant me to think so, this poor country girl was, I am convinced, far above her lover both in heart and brain. All the jealous misgivings of her own heart, all her fears that she did not really love him in the way a woman should love the man she marries, were poured out in these letters, and what do you suppose was the result?'

"For the sake of my own word I would have married her," his lordship confided to me, "and having once passed that word no consideration of her lowly birth or want of fortune would, for one moment, have had weight. But her letters frightened me. I could stand any form of temper, I could reconcile myself to indifference, but a woman with a passionate, exacting, self-questioning, self-torturing disposition would just drive me wild. These fine characters for a play or novel are the ones to make a man like me utterly wretched in domestic life." He wasn't quick enough to see how poor the compliment was that he implied to me by such a speech, and you may be sure no look or word of mine enlightened him; but I did feel, Esther, yes, I did, how small he was! How great a fool to have given up a woman who could love him, how thoroughly little to be able to speak of her like this to her successor!'

'He has only lately succeeded to his title, you say?' and Esther's voice was singularly low and unmoved as she asked this.

'Only about a year ago, but, to do him justice, I don't believe that that, or any worldly consideration, had anything to do with his breaking off his engagement. He was summoned back hastily to England to attend his cousin's death-bed; went, as a matter of course, to see his lady-love; as a matter of course—the cooling process having been once set up—was more utterly *disillusioned* the moment he did see her, and one fine morning or winter evening, I forget which, found himself Lord Feltham and a free man at about the same moment.'

'His name before then was—?'

'Carew, of course. The Honourable Oliver Carew. I remember quite well dancing with him two or three seasons ago, and wondering whether the raw material would ever come into anything like shape as it got older. Little I thought then I should have anything to do with the shaping of it! You have never seen his photograph, have you? Let me get it for you, and say whether it is astonishing that

any poor little simple country girl should go near to breaking her heart for such an Adonis!

Miss Dashwood went to her dressing-table, took a small case from it, and put a portrait into Esther's hands. Oliver Carew's portrait.

Miss Fleming looked at it quite calmly; listened to Jane Dashwood's running commentaries upon its defects and beauties; and gave not the faintest visible sign of emotion as she did so. Very few men possess this kind of courage: all women do. It is the instinct of concealment given by nature for self-preservation to the weaker creature: nothing more. All a mistake to call it either superior power of endurance or superior capacity for deceit. In supreme moments, and with one of her own sex present, any woman can conceal, or act, or feign any passion whatsoever, and this without effort, almost without consciousness of her own. The beetles who extend their feet in the air, and pretend death when you touch them, don't, I fancy; go through any process of mental or moral ratiocination prior to that action.

'He seems to have good eyes, Jane, and rather a nice mouth. I admire Lord Feltham.'

'Because you have never seen him. His photograph is handsomer than himself, as is always the case with men of tolerably straight features and no mind, no expression. Do you think him handsomer than Paul, for example?'

'They bear no comparison. As far as feature goes, Lord Feltham might be considered the best-looking.'

'And how do you judge of him after what I have just told you? He must have a great deal of delicacy, of generosity, must he not, to choose me for his confessor on such a theme?'

'I have no doubt there are many men who would do the same. Vanity, desire even to appear well with you, might make him lightly betray the confidence of this unknown country girl. And, besides—but here her voice did falter a little

—'you don't say that she wished him to be faithful. He did not tell you that the infidelity was wholly on his side?'

Jane Dashwood laughed; and, although the whole matter was disconnected with Paul, disconnected with the man she loved, Esther felt she almost hated her for that light laugh—so hard is it for any woman to see even a rejected lover in the keeping of another.

'As I have told you so much, Esther, I may as well tell you all. The story isn't a particularly interesting one to you or to me, still it is a good illustration of the truth of what I said to you, that any man is unworthy of the honest love of any woman. This country girl, whose name even I don't know, evidently loved Lord Feltham a thousand times better than I or any one else will ever love him while he lives. He tired of her—tired of the very strength of her exacting honest love—broke with her when his coldness had roused her temper to the utmost, and then told me, her accidental successor, every particular of the love affair! He did more. I hate him for it. He gave me a relic of hers! You shall see it. I can't bear to have it in my possession. According to my weak faulty code of honour there is treachery in my ever having seen it. What do you say? Your ideas are fresher and truer than mine in these things.'

She went to a bureau, and presently took from it a little packet which she gave into Esther's hand. 'Open it and look, Esther, there is nothing much to see. "Only a woman's hair," only a woman's ribbon, you know. The old, old story.'

Esther opened and found—a little blue silk neck-tie, one she had worn that last night when they were together on the moors, and which Oliver's urgent prayers had made her yield to him as they parted at the garden gate.

'He gave you this!' she cried. 'It was false! it was very false!'

'And, indirectly, it contradicted his own account,' said Miss Dashwood. 'No girl, not the most ignorant, the most forward, ever gave

such a gift as that to a man unless he sued for it. Don't misunderstand me, however,' she added, 'by thinking that Lord Feltham brought his love-tokens to me, and boasted of them in cold blood. Of that, I should hope, for his own sake, even his vanity is incapable. As far as the ribbon first coming into my hands goes, I must confess it was my fault. I was in a miserable temper one day (it was quite early in my engagement, and Arthur had met us together and congratulated me, poor fellow! without a quiver on his lips), a temper in which the only hope of distraction lies in making some one else as miserable as oneself, and so when Feltham wanted to begin the accustomed love-making I drew myself away from him—that I always do in spirit, mind, if not openly—and told him I was convinced he did not really care an atom for me, that his heart was with his first pastoral, simple love, and so on. You know—no, you don't know, the kind of way one has of tormenting, without really alienating, any man who is fool enough to be tormented. He listened to me a long time without being much moved; at last, when I had said something very bitter, he jumped up and the blood flew into his foolish face, and he asked me, very hot and nervous, how he could prove to me that he loved me, and that my suspicions were wrong. "Give me up whatever relics you possess of your first foolish love," I cried. "Not the letters, for it would bore me to death even to look at them, but everything else. I won't believe you care for me if you don't promise to give up all the girl's presents to me at once."

'He looked irresolute, so I held my handkerchief to my face, and then—well then, naturally, he promised. He had but one relic, he said, one poor and worthless gift, which it would have been better for him to have destroyed with his own hands; however, as I wished it, I should have it, and I had it, of course, that night. Esther, how I hate weakness in men! A man of common honesty ought to have

given me up sooner than have let me touch what had belonged to another woman. Don't you think so?'

But Esther made no answer. She was not in a condition to speak. Not alone her faith in Oliver—that had never been strong—but her belief in all love, her hope in life, her faith in Paul, seemed ebbing from her fast, as she sat there with her own little faded neck-ribbon in her hand. Even as her first girlish love had been betrayed and died, so, a voice seemed to say to her, would her present one. And love was her life; and all the feelings at which Jane Dashwood sneered were the feelings she considered holiest and best worth possessing; and if this new creed were really true and the old one hollow, she felt it would be a very good thing indeed just to die at this moment with the little relic of her girlish life in her hand, and the passion so warm and strong and full of vitality yet in her heart. If she lived and found Paul worthless, what should hinder her from becoming like Miss Dashwood or Mrs. Scott?

'You are half-asleep, Esther,' broke in Jane's voice, 'and it is just like my selfishness to keep you here listening to things about which you cannot possibly feel any interest. Go off to your bed, dear,' and she leant over and kissed the girl's flushed cheek; 'you ought to have been there two hours ago at least—only just tell me before you go what you think I ought to do with poor Phillis's neck-ribbon?'

'Burn it,' said Esther, curtly. 'If you like I will do it for you.' And she rose and held her hand out to the fire.

'I—well—' Miss Dashwood hesitated; 'perhaps it is best so after all; Lord Feltham is not likely ever to ask me for the thing again.'

'Not at all likely,' returned Esther, with a laugh; 'he regarded it simply as a trophy of the woman who had loved him, not as a relic of the woman he had loved. Let us hope that Phillis has outlived the remembrance of her folly as utterly as he has.'

And then she dropped the ribbon

into the fire, and stood and watched patiently until the last shred of its frail fabric had consumed away into ashes.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### DANGEROUS.

Perhaps there are few more edifying scenes in the drama of social life than that afforded by two thorough women of the world who have been intimate, who have clashed, and who are now living, and purposing to live, on terms of great affection and esteem. How they meet, how they kiss, how they admire each other's dresses! how they stab, how they wound, how they injure in every possible way, and how they smile amidst it all!

Men quarrel grossly—somewhat as inferior animals quarrel: an insult, a blow; a sarcasm, a direct reply; a rivalry, a definite estrangement. In women's feuds there is the essentially human element—the capacity for feigning, for ambuscading, for patient, long-suffering hatred, for the outpouring of sudden deadly venom months, years, after the first wound has, to the eyes of careless beholders, healed.

Women are better lovers of the other sex, and better haters of their own, than men; who, among other masculine qualities, are really capable of genuine friendship and of genuine forgiveness. If you have offended a commonly-honest man, and he is once able to get over the offence and take your hand, I don't think you have more to fear from him than from another; but let a woman injure a woman, in anything pertaining to men, and show me one solitary case in which hearty, absolute forgiveness is the result.

I am cynical, you say; this is a one-sided view of human nature; there are women who take delight in each other's success, who absent themselves at opportune times, that their friend may marry the man they themselves love. Ah, well, I have heard of all these things in fiction, and in pretty little poems also, but I have not found them confirmed by what I have read of women in history, nor by any expe-

rience I have gleaned in contact with my kind. When I meet with such generosity in life I will gladly bear witness—yes, on that moment I will sit down and write and publish some book wherein my new experience shall be frankly, generously recorded. Until then, I must speak of things as I find them.

Novelists, at best, are one of the doubtful benefits of an advanced stage of civilization; but what would novelists be if, from highest to lowest, each one of them did not speak his own small personal experience of men and women to the world. How would a naturalist be forwarding science, who, after a careful, minute investigation of the habits, say, of a Chimpanzee ape, should declare 'these are not what a Chimpanzee's domestic morals ought to be; let me rather ascribe to him the charming instincts and affections of a Kooloo-kamba?' Why, such a man's testimony would be that of a fool. Let him describe the Chimpanzees he has seen; let a novelist describe the men and women he has seen; and let other historians paint the habits of the virtuous Kooloo-kambas, or of the idealized, passionless creatures of the human species across whose path a kindly providence may have cast them.

It was a year or two before the commencement of this story that Mrs. Strangways first came across Paul Chichester, thoroughly by accident, in the box of a mutual friend at the opera. Paul was then much as I have presented him to you; moody, fitful, and wearing an exceedingly threadbare coat; but in one of those eccentric feminine caprices which no sane man would even so much as attempt to solve, Mrs. Strangways fell in love—no, I am loath to use that word—Mrs. Strangways fell into a fancy for him.

She was in the zenith of her power then; a dozen men in the house would have given months of patient hard work to obtain but half of the looks which she accorded to Paul's unconscious face that first night. And she knew that he was indifferent, and liked him the more

for it; and the flatteries of men whose attention, up to that time, had seemed the one thing in London worth coveting, became suddenly stale, flat, and unprofitable in her sight; and when she went home it was to dream, not as usual of the people who had envied her successes, and of the instrument by which the successes had been won, but of one sombre unknown face, of one low voice, which had not spoken above a dozen words into her ear. As much as it was in such a nature to feel a regard in which no small vanity, no idea of personal triumph could enter, Mrs. Strangways did feel it, in those early days, for Paul.

With her resources and her determination, she was not long in bringing him to her house. 'Mr. Chichester will not go to parties,' said the friend in whose box she had seen him: 'the opera is the only place of amusement to which he ever goes, and even there his visits are rare. That you saw him once in my box is a matter of purest accident. We are old friends of his father's family, and about twice a year he comes in, unexpectedly, as he did last night, to dine with us. For the rest, we don't even know where Paul Chichester lives. Notes left for him at such a stationer's in New Bond Street find him.'

Notes left at that stationer's in New Bond Street very soon did find him; invitations to dinner, invitations to morning concerts, invitations to evening parties; every kind of invitation with which a man's temptation can be compassed. He refused them all, systematically; that Mrs. Strangways expected; and then he came to call at the house. I believe he only meant, in his heart, to leave a card; but fate—which certainly does seem to assist unworthy persons as well as good ones—fate willed that at the very moment when he was standing, rather irresolutely, at Mrs. Strangways' door, Mrs. Strangways herself returned from her afternoon ride, and Paul, as a matter of simple courtesy, had to assist her from her horse, and then accompany her into the house.

It was just in the dusk of a winter's afternoon, and instead of ordering lights, Mrs. Strangways stirred up the fire into a ruddy blaze, and seating herself on a low ottoman beside it, began to talk to Paul as if she had known him twenty years at least. Her lithe and rounded figure, her mass of falling golden hair, never showed to greater beauty than when she was *en amazone*. She looked doubly beautiful by the kindly aid of this soft light, and heightened by every charm of a voice and manner that more than a dozen years had trained to perfection in the science of seduction.

When Paul found himself in the cold street, walking home to his hard prosaic life, that night it did come upon him, strongly, that there are things sweeter than duty in this world; that he was acting quixotically in giving up all the rest of humanity for the sake of the one poor blighted life that happened to have a moral claim upon him; that—and here lay the most dangerous temptation of all—it might, at least, lighten his dark, dull existence to look occasionally at the world into which he should never more in reality enter; it would enable him to work better, more heartily, more genially, if sometimes—once or twice in a month—he were to abandon himself to the perilous pleasure of gazing upon the refined and lovely face, of listening to the gentle syren accents of the woman he had left.

In another month he had become intimate with her. Only at certain hours, on certain days, was he free; but every one of these hours (all twilight ones) he gave to Mrs. Strangways, who invariably remained at home and alone when she knew that he was coming. There was no one to interfere with their intimacy. Mr. Strangways was abroad; friends or children never entered the room when Paul was in it. Everything was against him; the circumstances, the time of meeting, his own isolated life, his companion's only too evident preference for his society. And still his head continued sane, his heart whole.



He was not a man to love through, or, consequently, to be won by, the senses alone. That dim-lighted, luxurious little drawing-room, with its voluptuous atmosphere of hot-house flowers, its pictures, its statuettes; Mrs. Strangways, in all the abandon of her dangerous loveliness, were wholly insufficient to compass Paul's enslavement by themselves. Had mind, had soul, had genuine passion, even, suddenly arisen, Phoenix-like, from that merely lovely shell of hers in addition to all its undeniable physical charms, I cannot take upon myself to say that his strength of will would have been superhuman. As it was, he never, no, not for one moment, stood upon the threshold of danger.

For a man like him to fall into an entanglement from which principle, from which reason alike held him back, some part of his own better nature must, from the onset, be enlisted against himself. He must honour, even while he dishonours; he must take refuge against that contempt which is the death of love by dwelling on, or imagining, whatever of gold is separable from the clay whereof his idol is made.

But Paul, from the first, knew that there was no gold in Mrs. Strangways. He was too worldly-wise, too shrewd; not to perceive that all her best poses, moral as well as physical, were poses that had been gone through a hundred times before. He was too fresh, too genuine of heart, not to detect the false ring, the base alloy of Palais Royal gold, discernible through all her most exalted sentiments and little childish outbursts of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness.

As a beautiful picture, as an all-but-finished actress, he admired her; as a charming companion—the zest of novelty yet upon their acquaintance—he sought her; as a woman, however artificial, however erring, he liked her, and would have spoken well of her till he died, for her undisguised preference for himself. More than this she had it not in her to influence him. Just at that particular time, the ice of long habit broken, his imagination warming around subjects so long forbidden,

Paul Chichester's loyalty might easily have been estranged, and by a far plainer woman, one far less skilled in pleasing than Mrs. Strangways. But it was not to be so. Mrs. Strangways continued his sole acquaintance, and for Mrs. Strangways he never felt one spark of genuine love, or even of that other compound of selfish passion and selfish vanity which men and women of the world are accustomed to dignify by the name.

She failed, and, as a matter of course, was sensible of her failure, and yet she did not hate him! He was so devoid of vanity, so thorough, so manly, so delicate in all his intercourse with her, that even Mrs. Strangways' heart could not keep from liking him under the very assurance of her own defeat. She had begun by wishing to enslave him; she ended by being—for at least six weeks—enslaved; yes, and guilty though such a feeling must, of necessity, be, by about the honestest influence of all her poor, false, wasted, frivolous life. At the end of these six weeks it occurred to Paul that he was acting as he had no longer any right to do in coming so often to see her; a look, a word, a tone, something, I scarce know what, on Mrs. Strangways' part, conveyed this knowledge to him, and he at once began to make his visits more rare. She was not quite sure of him as yet; not quite sure that his coldness was not feigned—part of that same game she had herself so often played out and tired of, and by dint of much exertion and many subtle manoeuvres she succeeded in inducing him to come to a large ball at her house. If he was using one of the ordinary weapons in such warfare, she would bring forward the acknowledged best system of counter-attack. Mr. Chichester should see the woman towards whom he would profess a waning interest surrounded, courted, admired by a score of other men.

He saw her so; and whatever poor remains of his first feelings for her yet lingered they received their death-blow that night. Drest, excited, flushed with success, Mrs. Strangways actually repulsed him.

His feelings towards a woman he had worshipped would not have been heightened by seeing her an object of passing devotion from a roomful of other men. Personal vanity must be predominant in a man whose love can be rekindled by such small jealousy as this; and of personal vanity Paul Chichester had singularly little. Mrs. Strangways, floating before him in her ball-dress, possessed successively by a dozen and a half of partners in those hot and crowded dances, was a person with whom he had, simply, no concern, no interest whatsoever. He might see her again by her own fireside in the twilight; might, accidentally, fall back into his old liking for her at such a place and at such an hour. At this ball she was less than nothing to him; and, hours before Mrs. Strangways' wearied head was laid upon its pillow, he had stolen away unseen, got back to his home, and forgotten her and her ball and all belonging to her in a cool and dreamless sleep.

She knew from that night upon what footing they were to stand to each other; and still she did not hate him; nay, more, she did not strive or even wish to hate him. In the most lost and humiliated lives we know that one strong, I had almost said one pure, passion will occasionally—God alone knows how—struggle up into being, and exist and have vitality, amid all the corrupt and choking influences of the moral charnel-house in which its unhappy possessor lives. Higher up in the social scale, in a class not reputed guilty, the class to which Mrs. Strangways belonged, it does, likewise, occasionally chance that one almost natural, almost noble sentiment will drag on a precarious existence for a time among the hosts of vain, of false, of unworthy ones with which such hearts are filled.

Of this kind became Mrs. Strangways' regard for Paul. If he chose for weeks together not to come near the house she bore his neglect with patience, and received him, when he did come, with an almost genuine flush of pleasure. She hoarded the brief, cold notes he had once or twice occasion to write her (putting

them away, not with other, later trophies, but in her little old school-girl's desk, where her father's letters still lay); she looked forward, as she could look forward to nothing else, to the rare occasions when he consented to go with her to the Opera. When he was with her there she would have turned away from the stereotyped flatteries of the most sought-after man in London to listen to the very plain, and frequently very scanty words that fell to her from Paul Chichester's lips.

It would be pretty, in the abstract, to believe that this one better influence, this one fact of honestly liking an honest man who ministered to not one out of all the worse qualities of her nature, would have had some kind of exalting influence upon such a character as Mrs. Strangways'. I speak of facts. It had no exalting influence at all. With him, she could well-nigh act herself into momentary simplicity; holding one of his notes, a book that he had lent her, in her hand, she could almost imagine herself such a woman as might have won his regard. At all other times, under the press of all the daily, hourly temptations of her life, Mrs. Strangways was Mrs. Strangways still; nay, more, the very thought of the one man she had failed to win made her more desperate in the pursuit of every other object in which success was certain and forgetfulness possible.

It was at this time that, restless and dissatisfied, she persuaded her husband to let their London house and take one in Bath for a year; and it was there she first made Jane Dashwood's acquaintance. Paul was going up and down to Bath just then (on that unknown quest which afterwards filled Milly's heart with so intense a curiosity), and almost before Mrs. Strangways' and Jane's first vows of eternal affection had had time to cool he was drawn into enacting the part of Miss Dashwood's accepted suitor. And this leads me back to the remark with which I commenced this chapter—namely, the edifying sight afforded by two women of the world who have clashed and are still living on

terms of outward affection and esteem.

All the bitterest feelings of Mrs. Strangways' nature—and, mind, her capabilities for hate were immeasurably superior to those for loving—were called into passionate life by Paul's defalcation, mock though his new allegiance might be. She detested the sight of Jane's face, the sound of her voice, of her very foot-step; and still, true to the instinctive rules of strategy which nature seems to implant in such women's brains, she invited the girl more and more to her house, and professed towards her a continually increasing amount of strong personal affection.

Jane neither liked Mrs. Strangways nor disliked her, save in a mild, contemptuous way, in those early days. Few human beings, either in love, or literature, or any other of the great battle-fields of life, dislike a competitor simply because they have outstripped him. It was when her friend had taken up the same weapons in her turn—when, sharpest of all reprisals, Mrs. Strangways had lured Arthur Peel to her side; and with no mock engagement here, but with the tangible fifty thousand pounds of Miss Lynes—that Jane began to feel with what kind of enemy she had to deal. It was in vain for her to say that her lover did not, in truth, admire Mrs. Strangways; had not, in truth, one thought of selling himself in marriage to Miss Lynes; the facts remained unalterable. Arthur Peel's daily visits at the Strangways' house, Arthur Peel's public devotion to the heiress, were things as patent now to the circle that knew them in London as they had been a twelve-month before to the circle that knew them in Bath.

And still she and Mrs. Strangways kissed when they met, and still Mrs. Strangways was untiring in offering her chaperonage to balls, concerts, and operas. She had forgotten Paul? you suggest: had forgiven Jane for being the cause of his first infidelity? Mrs. Strangways was not a woman either to forget or forgive even in small offences, much less in the one event

of her life in which her own heart had made its nearest approach to strong and genuine feeling. Her game was a sure one. She knew every turn of Arthur Peel's weak mind; was already the recipient of his hopes, the mediator, little wanted, between himself and Miss Lynes; his confidante in everything save the secret jealous attentions which, ever since her engagement with Lord Feltham, he had not ceased to offer to poor Jane. And these Mrs. Strangways divined, and, if it had been in her power, would have furthered. Jane Dashwood should have him to the last—to the last! should believe he loved her up to the very moment when his marriage with Miss Lynes was announced. And then—

And then she, Henrietta Strangways, would be avenged! Before judging her, or any other of the women of our time, too hardly, however, we should in justice remember that the days of secret poisonings, of little venomous presents of gloves and flowers, are over; and that moral stabs are really the only ones they can accord to their rivals. Remember, too, that for a temperament like hers the sense of one defeat is more poignant than the recollection of a hundred successes; also, that during all her false and disappointed life the nearest thing to a natural, uncalculating affection that she had ever known had been her regard for Paul!

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

##### LISTENING TO GIUGLINI.

Three or four days after Esther Fleming's arrival Jane Dashwood ran one morning into the nursery, where she was laboriously striving to impress some rudimentary moral truths upon Miss Natty's mind, and informed her that she was to be led into great and exciting dissipation that very night.

Mrs. Strangways writes and proposes to take you and me with her to the Opera. She has made up quite a large party; and we are all to return to her house to supper afterwards. Good-natured, is it

not? I imagine her reason for inviting us to be twofold—first, that I may have the gratification of witnessing Miss Lynes' attentions to Arthur during the entire evening; secondly, that Paul Chichester may be led into going by knowing he will meet you. However, we'll accept. Giuglini is to sing, which you, I suppose, will care for. And I want you to see Arthur and Miss Lynes, and tell me what you think now of the state of affairs between them.'

'If you meet Arthur I shall tell my papa!' cries out the *enfant terrible*. 'You know you're not to meet him. You're to marry Lord Feltham, as you've promised. And Miss Fleming isn't going to the Opera. Mamma said last night she didn't approve of governesses being brought out of their place.'

Miss Dashwood rewarded this infantine outburst first by pinching Miss Natty's ear till she screamed, then by silencing her with a huge lump of chocolate (always Miss Scott's prime object of adoration), and pushing her out of the room. 'How I pity you, Esther! With all your good qualities, having to train that imp. If I was in your place I should compromise with my conscience at once. Dose her with chocolate till she was sick, and never attempt to coerce her or teach her anything. You are conscientious; and, as a natural consequence, at the end of four days you look as pale and harassed as if you had had five years of such work. It will do you good to go to-night,' she added, kindly. 'I have already settled with Milly that we are to accept.'

When Esther left home she had resolved within herself to accept of no invitation, to partake of no gaieties that might be presented to her. But her heart did cry out too strong for resistance to go and hear this opera—to run this chance of meeting Paul. She longed, she longed passionately to see him! Her new life, with its round of cold and irksome duties, already weighed upon her. It was not possible for her to think more of Mr. Chichester here than she had done at home—wherever she was, was he ever

out of her thoughts? but while she thought of him there had been only a haunting dream; here, amidst strangers, amidst alien and repulsive tasks, it amounted almost to sharp and constant pain. And, besides this, she knew now that Oliver did not love—had never loved her; and that knowledge shook her in her belief of all men—above all, of Paul. If she could meet him, just feel the pressure of his hand, just feel his eyes upon her, once more, she felt that it *must* still something of the restless fever in her heart: not for one second rekindle hope: she regarded Paul, or said to herself that she regarded him, as bound by as strong a tie as marriage, but give her—oh, plausible casuistry!—just one thing in life worth living for—the feeling that he remembered her, that he regarded her still with somewhat of his ancient kindness.

She had learnt of late to school herself sufficiently to keep down the blood that would some weeks before have leapt into her face at the mention of Paul's name; but she at once professed herself to be strangely anxious to hear the 'Trovatore,' and, above all, to hear Giuglini sing in it; and during all the remainder of that day many and biting remarks as to the folly of persons craving after excitement out of their reach were dealt out to her by Mrs. Scott.

Milly was not, I think, more positively bad-hearted than other women, but her littleness of character made her an essentially cruel task-mistress to any person who chanced to be under her power. There are *Aspasias*, there are *Brinvilliers*, by the score, who are generous and faithful mistresses to their own dependents: I never knew a woman of the viceless, virtueless type of Millicent Scott who would not be a tyrant where she could. Natty, for very physical fear, she durst not, her husband she could not, coerce: Esther, as poor, as dependent, as intrinsically superior to herself in all things, seemed to Millicent's moral sense the most fitting subject in the world for household subjection. And then her training under Mrs. Dashwood enabled her to do this kind of work with such unction!

with so strong an intermingling of principle! with so much virulence! with so many tests!

It was not for *her* to dictate; but she did feel it her duty to advise. A woman who, like Mrs. Strangways, neglected all the most sacred duties of life, was not, in her opinion, a fitting chaperon for any unknown, unprotected young woman. Was it—was it possible that Esther could attend to her next day's duties? could take dearest little Natty, as she, Milly, so especially desired, to early service, if the quiet routine of duty were once broken in upon by irregular hours and false excitement?

'Milly, much as I love her, is a thorough compound of papa and of Mrs. Dashwood, too,' said Jane, as they were driving along on their way to Mrs. Strangways' house. 'A perfect specimen of the mingled selfishness and hypocrisy which our education so studiously sought to foster in us. Well for her that she has married a man who, with all his temper, all his obtuseness, doesn't cant! I never liked Marmy so well as when I watched his face while Millicent was improving the occasion by bullying you at dinner. He has, at least, the instincts of his kind, I suppose, and knows, though he could give no reason for knowing, that you will be good to the brat.'

Esther was silent, both then and during the entire drive. She had not felt—she had scarcely heard—one of Mrs. Scott's strictures upon her conduct. She was unconscious of Jane's good-natured efforts to take away the edge of their bitterness. All thought, all feeling, all consciousness, was absorbed in one nervous half-hope, half-sickening dread of seeing Paul; and by the time they were ushered into Mrs. Strangways' drawing-room, this feeling had increased to such an extent that she was forced to take Jane Dashwood's arm—she, ordinarily so calm and self-composed—and cling closely to it for support.

A glance round the room told her that Paul was not there, and her heart beat free again. Mrs. Strangways and Miss Lynes were sitting

alone, their coffee-cups in their hands, and evidently enjoying the interchange of familiar thought before the fire.

'So good of you to come!' cried Mrs. Strangways, as she rose and advanced with both hands cordially outstretched. 'Jane, dear,' and then an interlude of kisses, 'I haven't seen you for an age! Miss Fleming, I am so very glad to renew our acquaintance. You remember Miss Lynes, do you not? No? then let me introduce you again. Miss Fleming, Miss Lynes.'

The heiress half rose from her chair, and slightly unclosed her eyelids at Esther, extending at the same time a cool three fingers to Jane. Six months in London under Mrs. Strangways' care—for they now lived together, Miss Lynes' ample means greatly benefiting the Strangways' ménage—had not improved this young person's tone. She was beginning to see what money really is, not only among a limited provincial circle, but in London. She was growing accustomed to see pretty and high-born women neglected, for her sake, by men whose attentions rich and pretty and high-born were alike eager to win; and the effect was precisely what this kind of influence never fails to bring about in a character of innate, mean vulgarity. She gave herself airs; she affected to treat with coolness women into whose society she plumed herself in her heart at being admitted; she played fast and loose with half a dozen suitors, Arthur Peel included, at a time; she displayed her wealth with disgusting ostentation at all times and seasons; she led her intimate friend, Mrs. Strangways, a life which really, in the general summing up of accounts, ought justly to be put against a great many of the sins and shortcomings of that imperfect lady's life.

And she got to dress worse than ever. Have you not remarked that in some persons bad taste is cumulative? strengthening with years, fed and kept up by the assistance of first-class tailors, milliners, and all other appliances which its possessor may have at hand. One great fea-

ture of Miss Lynes was that she rustled so prodigiously. Rising up now, preparatory to putting on her magnificent swans'-downed opera-cloak, there was a sound as of the whirling of autumn leaves from many forests. Surely the Lyons fabricant who turned out that resplendent inch-thick yellow silk must have been told it was for an English heiress, who desired that the world should not only see but hear the outward evidences of her wealth. Mrs. Strangways smoothed down its bristling splendour with a loving hand, adjusted the heavy burnous carefully over the broad shoulders, and then took a glance—only one furtive glance—at the image of herself, as she appeared standing there at Miss Lynes' side.

It was a sufficiently striking contrast. Mrs. Strangways never looked better than in the dress which she wore to-night—black velvet. Her undulating yellow hair was braided back plain from her face, leaving only a profusion of little natural curls, or rather circlets than curls, upon the temples; a diamond tiara was placed very forward upon her forehead; diamonds set, like the tiara, completely *à jour* quivered upon her matchless throat and arms. Looking at her you felt that Helen, Cleopatra, Guinevere, all the women who have set kings and kingdoms in arms for their sake, must have been cast in somewhat such a mould as this. Dark eyes they may have possessed; but I am convinced all the real conquerors of the world—the women who have conquered heroes—must have had the same luxuriant masses of supple waving yellow hair—hair whose slightest touch is a caress!

Poor Esther remembered strongly at this moment Paul having once told her that his admiration was for fair women; and her heart sank, involuntarily, as she looked at Mrs. Strangways' superb beauty, and remembered that in the shadow of that beauty Paul was to meet her again for the first time. Women of ordinary looks, or possessed, like Esther, of a beauty in which intellect is supreme, are invariably far more jealously afraid than they

need be of the mere sensuous loveliness of other women. They have no idea—how should they have?—how little such loveliness interferes with their prerogative. Let a woman like Mrs. Strangways have known a man three weeks without enslaving him, and, as far as that man is concerned, she is less to be dreaded than half the little quiet, plainish, Jane Eyre-like women whom you may count among your friends. Women won't believe this: they think that men, yes, even their own husbands and lovers, must always be ready to succumb, heart and mind and soul, to any very handsome siren who chooses to exert her power; but they are wrong. The same beauty does not charm all senses; and when, by some hidden want, it fails to do so, it is oftentimes all but repulsive, I mean as regards any feeling of love.

'We must send into the dining-room for Mr. Peel,' said Mrs. Strangways, as she consulted the time-piece. 'Tom, of course, won't go; he never will go anywhere at the last; but it would not be fair to deprive Miss Fleming, who has never heard Giuglini, of any of the opera.' And she rang, and desired the servant to let the gentlemen know that the carriage was already waiting.

'And where is Paul?' asked Jane, bringing in his name to hide the blush and tremor which would overcome her still whenever she expected Arthur Peel. 'I thought Paul was to have dined with you, and that we should all go together.'

'Who can rely upon Mr. Chichester?' answered Mrs. Strangways, with a careless little shrug of her shoulders. 'I, for one, have quite ceased ever to think he will do any one thing that he is asked to do. "If he possibly can get away from his other engagements, he will join us at the Opera," he wrote me word this morning; and I suppose with that vague hope we must all,' and she glanced at Esther, 'strive to be content. Mr. Peel,' as that gentleman entered the room, 'how good of you to answer my summons so quickly! Tom not coming, of course? I thought not. I forget



whether you made Miss Fleming's acquaintance in Bath. Mr. Peel, Miss Fleming.'

Arthur shook hands with Esther and with Jane, and then, in obedience to a look from Mrs. Strangways, offered his arm to the heiress. As Esther followed them down the stairs, and marked the pretty imbecilities which Mr. Peel whispered, with as much warmth as his chronic state of boredom would allow, into Miss Lynes' ear—the tone of voice in which Miss Lynes deprecated his flatteries by such remarks as, 'Oh, la, Mr. Peel! now, how can you? You silly creature, I declare I won't go in the same carriage with you, if you go on in this way!' and the like—as she marked all this, it occurred to her very forcibly that, however jealous Arthur Peel might be of Lord Feltham—however much he might yet, at unseen times, haunt poor Jane's path—one fixed resolve was in his heart—to possess the fifty thousand pounds of Miss Lynes.

And she knew also, before they had been at the Opera half an hour, that Mrs. Strangways was not indifferent about Paul Chichester's coming; that Mrs. Strangways was dissatisfied, though the box was beset with men all eager to pay her attention; that her eyes glanced quickly towards the door whenever it opened, and then sought to read upon her, Esther Fleming's, face some signs of the same feeling which disturbed her own peace.

[What intuitive faculty—often-times correcter in its results than any effort of reason—is it that makes untaught people guess so near the truth when they have to judge of things and persons essentially artificial? No one could be stronger than Jane Dashwood at improving upon slight suspicions, supplying small links when they were wanted to hasten the fall of a suspected person's good name, and such work. And yet, with all her quickness, Jane Dashwood was as often wrong as right in her judgments upon the most ordinary motives, the most ordinary emotions, of her compeers; while Miss Fleming (who knew no more of the world of such people as these than

De Voltaire's 'Ingénu' knew of the world of the Père de la Chaise and of Monseigneur de St. Pouange)—Miss Fleming saw clearly, after half an hour's quiet watchfulness, what every one of her companions was driving at! Perhaps an illustration may serve as an answer. If you go, on a pure winter's day, into the sitting-room of an ordinary German habitation, crowded with men and women, you are sensible, at first, not of impending asphyxia alone, but of all the distinct abominations—the tobacco-smoke, the baked air, the garlic, the humanity—which go to make up that most unclean atmosphere. In an hour's time—if you once overcome your nature and stay—you not only breathe the vitiated air like the rest, but are unconscious of your own diminished vitality: all the sharp recoil of disgust, all the fine discrimination of an hour ago gone: you are one of them. But I only throw out the illustration. I don't moralize.]

As time went on, however, as she felt that the moment drew near in which she and Paul should meet, all recollections of the people she was playing a part amongst, all outward perceptions even of that crowded house and of the mock, or stage actors, became blank to Esther. Since they parted, nearly a year ago, she had so incessantly brooded over Paul, and over her own love for him, and over her vague hopes, and her distinct despair—she had so overlaid reality with dreams, as scarcely to remember, at last, the manner of their parting—the footing upon which, in actual truth, they stood to each other. But now every word of that last twilight interview returned unbidden upon her mind; and above all, and with cruel clearness, did she remember that she had all but offered to give up her life to him if he would accept it, and that he had not—he had *not* accepted it; he had parted from her coldly. She felt again the old desolation close upon her, as she watched his figure fade in the distant street; felt again the passionate anguish with which she had prayed God that night to pardon her, as she swore while she

lived that she would be true to Paul and to her new faith.

And so much misery—a year of never-ceasing suffering—just because Mr. Chichester had chosen to amuse himself by making her a half declaration at parting—a declaration which meant nothing at the time, and which he had probably never taken the trouble to remember since! She had just repeated some such form as this; involuntarily putting it into words, as people do when, by mechanical process, they think to overcome unwelcome emotion, when the door of the box opened quietly, and Paul Chichester took the vacant place close beside her.

Mrs. Strangways looked round, and her face alone would have told Esther who it was that had arrived; but she knew it already. Why do none of the persons who concern themselves about communication with the spiritual world seize hold upon and make much of this wonderful prescience by which human beings in love become cognizant of each other's presence? To have messages from departed friends written in large letters and doubtful grammar upon one's arm, is an experience that only falls to the few. All men or women who have loved can look back upon a time when, without hearing, or seeing, or knowing, they *felt* the presence of the person loved, whether that presence entered into church, ball-room, theatre, synagogue, or any other building.

Is the affinity of the spirit or of the flesh? I don't know in the least; I know that it exists, and Esther Fleming knew it, too; and in the wild thrill of her pulse, the sudden tightening of her breath that it occasioned, quite forgot that it was her duty to look round and bid Paul welcome, and hide, by a cool, unconscious manner, all these ridiculous tumults which it is so utterly indecent for young women living in the world to feel.

So Paul Chichester leant over her, and spoke first. 'You are too absorbed in Giuglini to take any notice of me, Miss Fleming?'

'Giuglini—I have not been listen-

ing to him,' and then she turned and gave Paul all the glowing delight of her honest face. 'Oh, Mr. Chichester, I am so glad to see you again!'

Their hands, their eyes met: and the curtain rose upon precisely the same scene of the great tragedy, love, whereon it had fallen twelve months before.

'You told me then you would never see me again,' said Esther, 'and you were wrong. I knew it at the time.'

'And what has made me wrong?' Paul whispered. 'How is it that you are here, and alone?'

'I have come to live with Millicent, as governess to Mr. Scott's little daughter,' answered Esther, demurely.

'Of course. I have heard that already; but my question is not answered. How is it that you are away from home, and yet alone?'

'Because all, all that I spoke to you about once is over. Don't you remember I told you when I saw you last that it *should* be over? It had no real life in it from the first, Mr. Chichester, and it was a happy thing for both of us when it died outright. The—the other person is going to marry some one far better suited to him than I could ever have been, and I—'

'And you?' said Paul, in an eager whisper that made the blood start, whether she willed it or no, to her face.

'I am free, Mr. Chichester, free and alone, as I intend to remain during the remainder of my life.'

'Oh!' And then there was a long silence. One of those silences which, placed as they were, and with music stirring the pulses, and with the perfect solitude of a crowded assemblage all conspiring to assist, will go further, as you know, towards maturing love into passion than any number of words that the most eloquent human tongue could compress into a similar space of time.

'When do you go out?' said Paul, at length, with no particular relevance, as it seemed, either to the opera or the rupturing of Esther's engagement. 'I mean where, and

at what hour, do you take the young Scott out to walk?

'I take the young Scott in the Square from twelve till one on fine days,' answered Esther. 'That is, if Milly has nothing else for me to do. The child gets her afternoon walk with the nursemaid.'

'And is that all of the open air that you are to have every day?'

'I suppose so, but it is quite enough. I don't care in the least for walking in these dull London streets.'

'What made you come, then?'

'Mr. Chichester!'

'What made you leave your wholesome country home and come to London? You had better have stayed where you were.'

'I don't think so. The Dashwoods told you, I dare say, that Mrs. Tudor left me nothing when she died. My friends in Devonshire are too poor for me to burthen them always. If I would live I must work—and I like work,' she added, with a quick instinct of pride.

'Then why not work in the country? It would have been far better for you.'

She hesitated: she looked down.

'I heard of no one who wanted me in the country. I wrote to the Dashwoods—I mean, I mean—I wished to come to London.'

Paul scrutinized her narrowly. Lit up by the first flush of meeting, he had not noticed how much her face had changed during the last year. He saw it plainly now. Her cheeks were paler; the expression of her mouth was more sad; her eyes looked at you with the look of a woman's eyes, not a child's. What had changed her? What feeling but one ever suddenly initiates a girl of nineteen into the maturity of life and of suffering?

'You were quite wrong in wishing to come to London, Miss Fleming. All children, and indeed young people generally, imagine they have a longing for great cities, and what do they gain when they come? What do they gain, and how much do they lose? However,' he added, and, I must confess, a good deal in answer to the wistful disappointment of her eyes, 'I must

not complain of your resolution, however much I may think that the country would be best for yourself. I hope, now that we live within a few miles of each other again, I shall be allowed sometimes to come and see you as I used in Bath?'

After which remark, as Esther vouchsafed no answer, they steadily gave their attention to the last act of '*Il Trovatore*,' while one of them, at least, began to realize how marvellously like heaven sitting at the back of a crowded opera-box and listening to Giuglini's singing can be!

'Non ti scordar di me,' Paul whispered, as he put on Miss Fleming's cloak for her when the opera was over. And then she felt that she had an actual tangible happiness—something which, whatever the future might bring, was yet *hers* inalienably—to cling to until she should see him again.

One of the most pathetic things about a hopeless or forbidden passion is the foreboding with which it constantly looks onward, and, as it were, forearms itself against the coming dark hour. Don't you remember the sonnet in which the mighty hand that touched every remotest spring of human love and human suffering paints this very phase of which I try to speak in dull and blundering words—

'Against that time, if ever that time come,  
When I shall see thee frown on my defect.'

Happy love, tending calmly onwards to its earthly end, knows nothing of this foreboding, this haunting prophetic shadow of the time—when all shall be over! And still the law of compensation is unerring. Happy love, from its first dawn to its fruition, knows no such moments as one of these self-torturing, utterly hopeless, passions can yield.

If Esther had been engaged to Paul Chichester do you think that careless whisper of his would have occasioned her such wild rapture, or indeed any rapture at all? Of course not. It would have been common love-making.

And common love-making is not a rapturous employment.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## DIAMONDS WIN.

Mrs. Strangways' supper was a success. The women were all young, or fast, or pretty; most of them all three; the champagne was undeniable; Mr. Strangways had gone to bed. It was a success. Did any of the men and women who assisted at it enjoy themselves?

Three, at least, did not. Mrs. Strangways, who, however well other successes were working, could never quite get over the old pain when Paul was present; Jane Dashwood, who was quite away from Arthur Peel the entire evening; and, lastly, Arthur Peel himself. He took Miss Lynes to supper; he outshone himself in vacuous small-talk during the whole time that the meal lasted; he held undisputed possession of her during that hour especially dear to flirtation, between the time when supper ended and the departure of the guests. And still Arthur Peel's spirit was disquieted within him and his heart sore.

The real, stern part of any duty commences with the first positive sacrifice it demands; not in the making up of one's mind to perform it. Arthur Peel had determined, months ago, to give up Jane Dashwood and to marry Miss Lynes; but, somehow, the enormity of the act had always hitherto been brought before him in a modified and softened light. Miss Lynes had had other attentions on, and that had relieved him from a good deal of heavy work; and Jane, especially since her engagement, had been always ready to smile upon him the moment he quitted the odious side of the heiress; and Mrs. Strangways, too, had employed all her finished art to prevent him feeling overmuch the oppressive weight of Miss Lynes' preference.

But to-night he felt that fate was dead in his favour, and, as I have said, his spirit was disquieted within him. Jane had answered him only by curt monosyllables at the Opera and flirted outrageously the whole of the rest of the night with his greatest friend, little Tregelly of

the Blues. Mrs. Strangways had either looked, or pretended to look, upon his engagement with Miss Lynes as an accomplished fact, and never came near them or gave him assistance in any way. The heiress herself, wrought upon by Giuglini's voice or Mr. Strangways' champagne, or both—*que sais-je?*—the heiress gave him very plainly to understand that she had had quite enough of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and that unless he could make up his mind she would make up hers, and give the next man on her list, old Morty Delamaine, the benefit of the doubt to-morrow morning.

Now Arthur Peel meant devoutly that he, not Morty Delamaine, should marry Miss Lynes; and so of course the moment he clearly saw what she meant him to do he did it. Did he wish her to refuse him? Great heaven! how could he? when honour, name, everything that men, even the weakest, the most lost, crave after was to be built up for him by her money! He fervently wished that she would accept him, marry him, at once; but when the words that sealed his fate came (she had just taken a huge mouthful of chicken salad and turned her great white face with a look of disgusting, amative exultation full round on his) his heart, little emotional as he was, seemed to get cold and heavy as stone. This large lump of eating and drinking, and far worse, loving humanity was his: *his*, however he might hate her, however he might neglect her. His! And opposite sat Jane, the only woman for whom he had ever known or could know anything approaching to love, looking handsomer, of course, than he had ever seen her; soft, gentle, yet full of animated life; and engaged to Lord Feltham, and flirting desperately—oh, desperately, because so quietly! with little Tregelly, and evidently not caring one jot whether he was making Miss Lynes a passionate last appeal or merely imploring her not to make herself sick upon chicken salad.

Arthur Peel was not sentimental, neither did he possess any greater

amount of fine feeling than is ordinarily to be met with among young gentlemen living the life that he led; but as much acute suffering, as much mental disturbance as his not largely-endowed nature could sustain was his portion that night. If the heiress had been only four or five degrees less obtuse, or had taken only four or five fewer glasses of champagne, she must have seen how large a portion of the love-making fell to her share; how absent were the replies of her beloved in these first rosy moments of legitimate endearment; how resolutely, fiercely fixed were his eyes, not upon her, but upon Jane Dashwood's face.

But, happily for her own peace, when you consider the kind of life she was about to purchase for herself, Miss Lynes was now, as at all times, stoutly cased in the triple armour of unrefinement and supreme egotism. Arthur Peel had offered to her, and she had agreed to accept him. How awfully delighted he must be, and how unworldly she was to take a man without a farthing because she had a fancy for him! and how good it would be to see Jane Dashwood's face when she should invite her to be her bridesmaid; and what lovely teeth Mr. Peel had when you caught glimpses of them and of his beautiful red lips beneath that sweet, silky moustache! These, I think, were the prominent ideas or emotions that passed through the bride-elect's mind; and by the time supper was ended, and she was pressing Arthur Peel's arm as he escorted her to the drawing-room, her convictions were settled as to his being the most ardent, most demonstrative lover in the world.

Reader, if you are intimate with any woman of Mrs. Strangways' type, don't you know—and knowing, you must appreciate—the peculiar, indescribable atmosphere of her small *sans façon* parties? No uncongenial element enters into them. There are no chaperons, rarely any married men. You have never, by any chance whatever, any music to listen to, or cards to play, or dancing to do. You are never bored. You

always stop late. Men who would go to no other evening party in London would go to Mrs. Strangways', and go a second and a third time. Men hard as flint during the last ten years of their lives, men who would neither marry nor flirt, nor compromise themselves in any other way whatever, had been known to become as wax in the hands of herself and of her staff on these occasions.

To-night the spell was at its culminating point. Whether some hearts were heavy or gay, one out of every duo dispersed about the dim recesses of those two little dangerous drawing-rooms meant something;—and think what an enormous proportion this is in a game wherein both sides are never equally earnest, and where, in the vast majority of cases, neither is one whit so! Little Tregelly told Jane Dashwood, definitely, at twenty minutes past one A.M. that he would hold himself responsible for the consequences if she would break off her engagement—Tregelly, who until this moment had never approached within a hundred miles of love with any unmarried or marriageable woman before! Miss Lynes, as you have seen, had obtained fast and irrevocable hold upon Arthur Peel; and Paul Chichester—well, in spite of principle, of fixed resolve, of mere common sense and common honour, Paul, with every word he uttered, was giving poisonous, cruel sustenance to that dream which the uncooled happiness of poor Esther's face but too plainly betrayed to him.

'You, at least, have enjoyed yourself,' whispered Jane Dashwood, as they prepared to depart; and, as she spoke, she laid her little stone-cold hand upon her friend's. 'As I sat listening to all the nonsense that empty fool chose to talk to me I looked at your face and envied you—envied you the power of believing as you believe Paul's fine false words now! Esther, stand by me,' she added, quickly, and with a ghastly attempt at a smile. 'Here comes Mrs. Strangways; and I know the expression of her face. My hour is come. Arthur is gone!'

When was a woman's instinct ever wrong in such a matter? Mrs. Strangways swept up to their side with her noiseless step, drew Jane's cloak closer, with her own hand, across the miserable, passionately-throbbing breast, hoped they had enjoyed themselves, hoped they would soon accompany her to the Opera again, and then stooped and whispered a word in Miss Dashwood's ear.

'You look surprised,' she remarked, as, notwithstanding her own forewarning, notwithstanding training, notwithstanding pride, the colour ebbed back out of Jane's face in this bitterest moment of defeat; 'and yet everybody must have seen what was coming. I have looked upon it as settled for so long that when Augusta whispered the news to me just now I had really no fresh congratulations to offer. Miss Fleming,' and she turned to Esther, 'I don't know why we should make this any secret from you. Mr. Peel is to marry Augusta Lynes.'

'Esther isn't likely to take any interest in other people's love-affairs to-night,' cried Jane; and steady though her voice was you could detect quite a hard, unnatural ring in it. 'Really the way in which my old friends are forsaking me is fearful. Even though one is engaged it is not a pleasant feeling, is it, Mrs. Strangways, to see the old worshippers kneeling at new shrines? I never thought Paul's manner could be full of tenderness and *petits soins* as it has been to-night; but then Miss Fleming is the first woman—except myself—whom I have ever seen Paul Chichester in the least admire. Thank you for your chaperonage and pleasant party, dear; and good-night.'

And then they kissed.

'But for the last time—the last time!' cried Jane, in her paroxysm of childish misery, as they were driving home. 'I kept up the face to the last because I would give her no additional pleasure in her hour of hateful triumph; but wait till I have had my last interview with Arthur—wait till I have met Arthur Peel once more, and you will see what terms I mean to stand upon with them all.'

'And I'll write to Lord Feltham!'—this burst out a moment or two later—'I'll tell him to come home, and I'll marry him—yes, before they are married; and I'll set about getting my *trousseau* ready to-morrow afternoon, after I have seen Arthur. I'm not going to break my heart: don't pity me, Esther—don't pity me! I shall marry Lord Feltham, and be among a set of people to whom all Miss Lynes' money will never admit Mr. Peel; and it will be best so. Esther, he hates her. I should go mad if I didn't know that. He hates, he loathes her, and takes her so, contemptible wretch as he is! loathing and all, for the sake of her money. Great heaven! what men are, that one should go so nigh to breaking one's heart for any of their falsehoods!'

When they got home Jane's mood had cooled, and she said all she wanted was to be alone and to sleep. But right through that night, yes, till the next cold winter's day had dawned, Esther heard the sound of Miss Dashwood's restless footsteps pacing up and down the room above her head.

And as she listened it was borne in upon her with remarkable distinctness to feel if one so fickle could suffer thus, what she, with all her larger capabilities for misery, would have to go through when her hour of awakening should likewise come!





## AN INCIDENT IN THE 'HOUSE.'

'SMITH, did you ever go over a mad-house?'  
'No, Brown. Have you ever seen one?'

(I may not say that Smith and Brown are cryptonyms, for Brown says he should never hear the last of it if it were known in his club that he had been 'made' so completely. But I anticipate.)

'I never have, my boy; but a man I know knows a great mad-doctor who keeps a swell private asylum on the north side of London somewhere; not a place with bars and chains, you know, but a kind of villa, where they dress for dinner—the sanest of them at least—and where they go in for the "persuasion-is-better-than-force" theory. He says—my friend, I mean, Prig (another *nom de guerre*), of the Treasury: you've met him—if I like to come with him, and bring a friend, he'll drive me down in his brougham this afternoon, and we can see over the whole thing. What do you say?'

'What time is it now? One? I was to have breakfasted with young Ace-Cater in Jermyn Street at half-past, but his man has just been to say that he went off suddenly last night to Baden-Baden on urgent private affairs. I'll go. Have some luncheon, and we'll be off to Prig.'

At two o'clock we were waiting in Prig's room: at five minutes past he sprang up the stairs, looking—for one who exhibited, under ordinary circumstances, all the repose that stamps the cast of Vere de Vere—somewhat flurried.

'Brown—excuse me—I was mentioning Stray Westcot and his asylum to Lord — (name omitted for reasons previously inserted), and he said as the mail wouldn't be in from Queenstown till six, he should like to go with us. Mr. Smith, will you accompany him in my brougham? Brown and I will show the way in a Hansom.'

Ten minutes more, and we were on our way. I felt at first doubtful what to say to the statesman, but as he seemed to prefer any topics to

those of national importance, and said he knew nothing of the news, for he had not had time to read the 'Times' that morning, we conversed on lunatics and their treatment. After an hour's drive we alighted at the asylum, or rather 'Lyon House.' The place looked much like the ordinary residence of a gentleman, and perhaps if we had not observed a benevolent-looking, elderly man sitting on a garden-chair in the grounds, with his feet and legs buried up to the knees in the soil, carefully watering himself with the appropriate pot, and complaining that he had only grown an inch and a half since yesterday, we should have doubted whether we could have come to the right place. Brown introduced us to Dr. Westcot, and that man of science seemed much honoured by the advent of his distinguished visitor—or visitors, I may say. He showed us over the whole of the establishment, explaining how the patients were allowed to do anything, within the bounds of possibility, they might wish. Opposition, he said, he was sure would only retard, or destroy all hope of their cure. As long as they only fancied themselves kings or cats, his plan was easily carried out; but some had so little method in their madness that it became extremely difficult to humour their caprices. A man who had been a distinguished ornithologist in the days of his coherence, believed himself an ostrich, and refused all sustenance but flints and tenpenny nails. This was thought too unwholesome, and for a time it was feared the sufferer would starve. At last his failing faculties were satisfactorily deceived by cold sausages and sticks of chocolate. Another believed himself Greenacre, and raved for a knife to cut up a body, or, he said, his crime would be discovered. A bungler would have prescribed solitude and irons. Westcot had a dummy made, of which the limbs buttoned on and off. The pseudo-Greenacre confessed that unbuttoning a limb was

easier than cutting it, and was already convalescent. The doctor mentioned a case which had recently occurred to him, in which the relatives of a young man wished to confine him because he made ducks and drakes of a fine property, and lived a reckless life. Westcot told them that he could not let such a patient have his own way, and he was determined not to use coercion. No one *could* be fast or extravagant (pecuniarily) in Lyon House. The young man must be restrained; but restraint was for the sane.

Having carefully inspected the whole building, we were invited by Stray Westcot to taste some fine 'Pic du Table' which he had already had in his cellar some days.

'If you will wait here a moment, my lords, I will give the necessary orders, and show you my own sanctum. Excuse me one minute.'

His steps still echoed on the stairs, when a keeper approached, and said, with a bow, 'Is any one attending to you, gentlemen? Have you seen the whole establishment? Have you seen the "House?"'

'The "House!"' we cried. 'No. What is it?'

'Oh, I thought Dr. Westcot would have shown you. I'll take you there myself, gentlemen. Some of our patients, you see, gentlemen, fancy they are Members of Parliament. Dr. Stray Westcot humours their fancy, and they have a room set apart for them to debate in. Most visitors like to see this, gentlemen. Will you follow me?'

'This is very curious,' said Lord —. 'It shows the deep hold the institutions of the country have even on maniacs. I shall observe their forms with great interest: they may perhaps suggest some improvements that I may introduce in another pl---.'

'Beg your pardon, gentlemen,' said the keeper, 'but I must tell you the rules to be observed in the "House." They made them themselves. I will show you into the room. You will see a form near the door. Sit down on that immediately. Don't take any notice of the speakers; but if any one says anything to you, all of you get up,

and bow three times. If you mind and do this, they will leave you alone. Do you understand?'

'Perfectly.'

'Quite so.'

'Thank you.'

'How very singular!' added Prig: 'they have a recognized strangers' gallery too!'

'We don't get bowed to,' said Lord —.

'Hush!' exclaimed the keeper, and opened a door.

We entered a moderate-sized room, with a table covered with green baize in the middle. Four men were sitting round the table, and a fifth was in the very act of speaking. We sat down on the indicated bench, and the keeper softly closed the door. A significant glance flashed along the faces of the 'honourable members' as we came in, and I, for one, felt rather apprehensive of violence. The orator was declaiming with some vehemence. He was a short, fat man, and was hot with exertion. He was just raising his arm to give the table a convincing knock, but he paused as we sat down. The members looked at one another, then the gentleman in possession of the House said:

'We understand that you wish—that you are desirous——'

We all rose from the form. Lord — made one of those bows (half ironical, half courteous) with which he sometimes illustrates a paragraph, and we all followed his example. We repeated our salutation three times. The members looked rather wildly at us, I thought, and one of them gave vent to a strange, snort-like sound, something between a laugh and a neigh. A tall, thin man sitting opposite to the first speaker then stood up, and said, in a bitter and caustic tone:

'It is as I said. You see that you are wrong. Gentlemen, I appeal to you. I contend that for the four unhappy beings before you, no less awful fate is fit than that they——'

Here, I confess, I became seriously alarmed. The fat man showed signs of becoming unmanageable, and the thin man pointed derisively at myself and my companions. Even Lord — looked furtively at the door. We saw that the attention of

the House was directed to us, and it seemed to strike us simultaneously that we must bow again. We did so. The effect was fatal. Fire gleamed in the thin man's eye. He pointed still at us, and cried:

'Look! look, sir, at them! wretched mimeries of humanity! they must be detained—they must be——'

This was too much. The fat man was redder in the face than ever. There was no knowing what these infuriated maniacs might do in their frenzy. Lord —— bounded to the door, and we rushed from the room. There were no degrees of precipitancy from *abijt* to *erupit*: it was *erupimus* in the case of all of us. Lord —— fled down the corridor with considerable 'headway' on, and at the top of the stairs encountered the doctor. The collision might have been serious, but Westcot saved himself by the balustrade.

'My lords,' he cried, 'where have you been? I could find you nowhere.'

'Been? In peril of our lives. We've been in the "House," and the members became infuriated.'

'The House?'

'Yes; you know: the House.'

'I beg your pardon: I don't quite.'

'Where they debate, you know: there, that room at the end of the passage. One of your keepers took us. Don't you understand?'

Westcot looked from one to another helplessly. He was evidently in the dark. We were bewildered too. At last, after staring blankly at us for some seconds, he burst into a roar of laughter.

'I see it all,' he stammered, as he gasped for breath in the intervals of his laughter. 'You've been—ha! ha!—that villain Querkett—ho! ho!—excuse me—'

The worthy physician was so cackinnatorily incoherent, and took so long to make us fully comprehend him, that I will explain matters in my own words. It appeared that two of the patients had for some time been rapidly recovering. They were anxious to leave Lyon House, and return to the custody of

their own friends. Westcot did not like to dismiss them without taking every possible precaution, and determined, with their full consent, that they should have an interview with three independent physicians. If these judges deemed it prudent for them to depart, they might go whithersoever they listed: if the contrary, they were advised to stay. At the appointed time the three doctors assembled. It chanced that on that day the vicar of the parish and one of his curates were present at the mad-house, for they occasionally held religious services within its precincts, and were sometimes required to make affidavit to the identity of inmates. These five gentlemen were collected in the waiting-room of the establishment. Dr. Westcot had already explained some of the symptoms to his colleagues. One of these, Dr. Pursy, maintained that the patients in question would indubitably turn out sane. Dr. Thynne Aslath was clear that if what was said of them was true, they must be mad. Dr. Pursy grew warm in the debate. The patients were expected every minute. We entered the room. All supposed us to be the two petitioners, and two of the upper keepers. Dr. Pursy was confounded in his opinion of our sanity by our maniacal act of bowing. Dr. Aslath was triumphant, and would have advised handcuffs and the stocks, without benefit of clergy, who supported the merciful view of the case. Then we fled. The keeper who introduced us was himself a patient, in general perfectly harmless, and sane enough to enjoy a practical joke, as madmen often are.

As soon as we heard the truth we hurried from the place. No man likes to be made a fool of. Here was Lord ——, holding in his hands the balance of peace and war, sat upon by a committee of suburban doctors. It was an awful 'do.' Frig will never recover, I believe, for Lord —— will always lay it all at his door.

If you tell the story, don't mention the names. I forget though: you can't, for I haven't myself; so it's all right.

## ROBSON.

I AM looking over an old sketch-book of mine : not one of your ambitious sketching tablets, your solid slabs, upon which I occasionally aspire, with melancholy result, to pourtray the tints of the forest and the mountain ; nor yet one of your large-leaved drawing-books, in which I adventure upon the caricature or graver cartoon ; but a little book, some seven inches by four, originally designed, I apprehend, for the keeping of accounts, but by me used for setting down figures of a totally different sort. It is an old pocket sketch-book, solely devoted to drawing in the theatres, and I now turn over its pages with melancholy interest. O register hieroglyphic of happy hours gone by, how many friends whom I have never known, how many objects who have never dreamed of my passionate attachment, do thy pages set before me ! Here I see the inimitable Box, and no less inimitable Cox. Here I see Herbert of the sunny hair and graceful form, whom I loved as one loves his favourite cousin ; and here the time-defying Stirling, for whom I entertained an affection half filial and half fraternal. Here is Charles, the second of his name, the merry monarch of high comedy. He was the first of the great actors that I saw : from him I first learned that nature and great art are twin sisters. And now, as I turn the page, I seem to catch a faint odour of dead rose-leaves, a stronger one of orange-peel ; visions of love in a cottage and passion in a pit rise before me : visions of maids and magpies, Kenilworth Castle and Court Favour. Oh ! Marie, Marie—ah, well ! I never told my love. And what have we here ? A little crouching figure, peering cunningly into the face of a man in the costume of an abbé. Who can this be ? This is he again—the same figure, but in different guise. A Jew now, an eager, grasping Israelite truly, but so comic withal—so irresistibly comic. He holds a knife and a pair of scales. Can this be Shylock ? If so, bare thy breast, Antonio, without fear. If he slay thee at all, it will be with laughter. Again, but this time a deformed dwarf, he sits aloft in an orange-tree, and holds sarcastic colloquy with an apparently terrified queen. And here an old white-haired man, pinched and sour-tempered, he crouches in an agony of desperation against the wall at the head of a staircase. A taller man in a riding-dress

looks at him in astonishment. Another page, and I see him again, this time in the dress of an ostler, leaning, in most impudent fashion, against a table, at which two gentlemen are luncheon. He pays not the least attention to one of them who is addressing him, but regards a glass of beer, which he holds in his hand, with the glance of a connoisseur. And can this be he ?—this woman in the ample robe, who, with one child in her arms and another holding to her garment, is descending that mountain-path ? Once more, and I see a little old porter, in knee-breeches and a short blouse, wheeling a heavily-laden barrow. He is evidently very poor ; he does not look as if he had enough to eat ; he is not strong enough to wheel that heavy load ; his face looks as if he had suffered, were still suffering, from some great trouble ; yet he manfully struggles on with his labour, and tries to whistle. I shut the book—I will look no more—Robson is dead.

Yes, a great actor has departed from among us, and but little notice has been taken of our loss. Half a dozen lines in this newspaper, and a short article in that ; an announcement that there will be no performance at his theatre on the day of his funeral ; and so the grave closes over Robson. This comparative carelessness about the death of a man to whom London is indebted for many delightful hours is due partly to the fact, that for more than a year previous to his death Robson had not appeared on the London boards, and partly that, for a year or so before he retired, he certainly was not the actor he had been.

Of all professions, the actor's is most dependent upon constantly retaining public attention. In all professions, the man who does

\* Give way,

Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,\*

must expect to fall behind in the general estimation ; but, as regards an actor, in whose case bodily presence is everything, this is especially true. He gets his living by being looked at for two or three hours every night. If he is better worth being looked at than his brother actors, he gains a reputation. This reputation must be kept up in the same way that it was won. If he dies or retires from the stage, what remains of him for people to admire or honour ? When a great poet dies, he leaves his

writings to save him from oblivion. They are immortal, and by consequence he is immortal too. When a great artist dies, his name lives on in the pictures that he has given to the world; but it is different with an actor. Directly death has closed the lips upon which hundreds hung with delight, and stiffened the limbs whose every movement was so eagerly followed, what is left of the actor? In the green-room and amongst theatrical people, a temporary reputation; in the world outside the theatre, nothing. He leaves nothing for posterity to remember him by. Men may write for posterity, and paint for posterity, and make music for posterity, but no man can act for posterity. None but his contemporaries have part or lot in him. In those rare instances where actors have escaped this hobbyhorse \* fate, it has been solely owing to their connection with great men whose memory the world honours for substantial reasons; but, as a rule, when the actor dies, his name is put out. How many men in ten thousand know anything about Knight, or Munden, or Liston? Who were they? Why, they were great actors of scarcely a generation ago. Lamb speaks of Munden with very high praise: who speaks of him now? In two generations will any one know more of Robson? Surely not. If the great actors of forty years since are forgotten in so short a time, what chance is there for the actors of the present day? Fifty years ago an audience at a theatre was something that an actor could respect. It was a bench of judges. What was good it heartily commended, and what was bad it as heartily and promptly condemned. There were real critics in the pit in those days. When the elder Kean, in the part of Shylock, abandoned the received way of delivering the line—

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that,

and gave it,

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that—

the improvement was instantly perceived and applauded by the house. But would such a change as that be appreciated by an audience in these days? I trow not. Now, when the worst piece is certain of favour, when a performer who cannot sing and dance is a drug in the Theatrical market,

\* 'Or else shall he suffer, not thinking on with the hobbyhorse, whose epitaph is, For oh, for oh, the hobbyhorse is forgot.'

what real interest or affection can an actor, however good, hope to excite in his audience? If actors have degenerated, which however, I very much question, it is because audiences have set them the example. When I call to mind what pleases a London pit at present, I wonder no longer that Robson dies and not a soul seemingly cares that the stage has lost its most original and most powerful performer. What does it matter to the present Theatrical Public? Mr. Beverley's pictures and Miss Chloe's legs are left us still. Who cares? Up with the curtain. Silence for the song by the Bedlam gentleman! Attention to the dance arranged expressly for this theatre by an ingenious inmate of Hanwell Asylum.

Robson, say the writers of his brief memoirs, was the best of our burlesque actors. Undoubtedly he was. But to dismiss the subject of his acting with such a remark as that is unjust. A burlesque actor, at present means a man who dances and sings as they do at the music halls—those saloons of pleasure, where vice and folly listen nightly to what would be merely nonsense if it were not profane and indecent, in the same way that carrion would be merely dead flesh if it were not alive with maggots; alas! for the public taste when such places draw—and who in his dialogue lays due emphasis upon every pun. From such praise, then, we must conclude that Robson sang and danced better, and made more of his puns than his fellows. But was this all? Can any one who remembers the Medea think of it as a mere singing and dancing piece of absurdity? Can any one who remembers that strange figure, half queen, half pauper, one minute telling her woes in the querulous tone of the regular street-beggar, the next turning like lightning upon the bystanders and terrifying them with her passionate voice and gestures; now with frightful effort suppressing her rage while Jason confesses his engagement to another, and now losing all control and overwhelming him with reproaches; here standing before us a woman abandoned by the world, utterly hopeless, and here gathering strength from very desperation and planning her revenge with still-increasing passion, till she breaks into that wild frenzied dance that gives grotesqueness to the whole—can any one remember this just not tragedy, or tragedy gone mad, and compare it with the burlesque of any other actor? The truth is Robson's burlesque was unlike anything else of

the kind. The *Medea* was a piece of acting that you could compare with nothing unless you went to Robson again for a comparison. The difference between his burlesque and that of other actors seems to me to be this. They burlesque—even if they rise so high as that—only the trick and manner of tragic or melodramatic actors: he burlesqued the Passions themselves. This I think will apply to everything that he did. Look at his farce-acting. Even in that he always seemed to try to set his foot upon the natural rock before he made a step forward, to get hold of some characteristic of humanity to give a backbone of truth to the part. There was always something in his acting that betrayed a closer observation of human nature than you saw in the acting of other players. Who could act a nervous man as he did? Who that ever saw him could forget the quick nervous step; the peculiar twitching of the mouth; the strange uncomfortable movements of the hands, as if in some uncertain way they were trying to convey the notion that he was perfectly at his ease—oh! perfectly at his ease; the uneasy look of the eyes and the feeble smile that gave the lie to such a notion at once; and that sudden closing of eyes and mouth, and the quick clutch at the table, as if nature could stand it no longer and he were only holding on till something snapped? All this, true as it was to nature, was never so true as to be painful. A very nervous man is a painful sight; but the art of the actor here came into play, and depriving the representation of all that was unpleasant, but of nothing that affected its truth, made it at the same time admirably natural and exquisitely droll.

Could any one give you a jealous man as he could? Remember him when, so considerably to oblige Benson, he affected to be jealous. Recollect with what a display of passion he kicked that footstool, and with what a serious earnestness he prevented its rolling dangerously far. Remember with what a reckless hand he seized those candlesticks, and with what a quiet and careful one—so as not to spill the grease—he set them down again. And remember how fatally his mangel wurzels interfered with the green-eyed monster! But when the real jealousy seized him, how he lost at once all thought for his mangel wurzels and all respect for Benson's upholstery! how he raged about the room, and dashed the furniture here and there!—but yet, while his real jealousy was so unlike his assumed pas-

sion, recollect how, by some means or other, the real constantly reminded you of the assumed, and though amazingly funny in itself, was still more laughable because it brought out more strongly the absurdity of what had preceded it.

In the rapid changes from something intensely serious to something as intensely comic, Robson was without a rival. In such pieces as 'Daddy Hardacre,' and the 'Porter's Knot,' he would work upon you with his pathos till your eyes were filled with tears, and then, by a sudden touch of the ridiculous, would send them rolling down your cheeks for a cause the very reverse of that for which they were summoned. Or when the house was in full laugh, he would arrest the mirth when at its height by a word, sometimes by a look; and you would see a theatre full of faces darken into immediate gravity as the bright face of a lake darkens under a flying cloud. The sublime and the ridiculous are said to be very nearly allied; but with him they lay in such close propinquity that in his course he could spring from one to the other as he pleased. Like the conjuror who can, from his magic bottle, pour any liquor he chooses, Robson could from the same source draw either tears or laughter. And yet this did not destroy the truth of his representation. A serious character was still serious, although it excited your mirth; you laughed at Hardacre, but did not feel the less that he was a wretched despicable miser. You laughed at Sampson Burr; but, for all that, you did not love the brave old man the less, or cease to sympathize with his sorrow. Surely this was an evidence of wonderful power in the actor.

Robson was by no means without faults. He was much too fond of gagging, as the theatrical phrase is, of introducing impromptu bits into his dialogue. This is always a fault, for however happy the gag—and his were sometimes very happy—it almost certainly reveals the actor and destroys the illusion. In a farce this is perhaps of no great importance, but in a more serious piece it offends good taste painfully. Another defect of his was, that he occasionally overworked his pathos. He had too much a habit of taking himself by the throat and giving us to understand by a superabundance of muscular action that he was suffering from great mental distress, against which, however, he hoped to be able to bear up if we would give him time. But it was only in the last year or two



of his career that these blemishes became apparent, when continued ill-health had greatly affected his powers. Moreover, this is scarcely the season to point very critically to his faults. Let us think of him as he was when his grotesque passion in Medea first asto-

nished the town; when, as the miserly Hardacre, he was nearly distracted between his ducats and his daughter; and when, in the 'Porter's Knot,' he showed us that a little old man, most unheroic to look at, could be a true hero.

## THE ASHES OF LOVE.

'Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more;  
Men were deceivers ever;  
One foot in sea, and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.'

SHAKESPEARE—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

WHEN rivers reclimb the mountain side;  
When Time puts back for a thousand years;  
When the moon and the sea refuse the tide—  
Shall Love grow sleek on a diet of tears.

When the butterfly mourns o'er the shed cocoon;  
When the corpse is a care to the soul above;  
When the world learns to pray for night at noon—  
Shall Love be stayed with the husks of love.

Bred up together from childhood's time,  
Fair was the girl and fearless the boy;  
And each loved other as buds the Prime,  
And Love rained kisses, and was not coy.

How happy their dream they scarce could know;  
Scarce could they tell why a sigh was bliss;  
Till years, bringing sternness sweet to her brow,  
Gave a glance for words, and a blush for a kiss.

And their parents smiled as they saw the signs;  
And the course of their love ran smooth and bright;  
And its stream flowed soft as a breeze in the pines,  
Till it babbled its vows in the pale moonlight.

Now hath he left her to win him a name;  
More hath he left her to win her a home;  
And his letters tell of his constant flame,  
And her heart keeps tune with, 'Ah, would he come!'

His love-words anon seem like echoes of love;  
Of love that was first to a rival spoke:  
Ah! who is faithful, if false he prove;  
Or true, if his plighted troth be broke?

'Tis the first night of Winter, and Nature dies;  
Dies with her hope, as she sits and grieves;  
Tears flee the settled despair of her eyes,  
While the blast pelts her window with withered leaves.

Hark!—nay, we shall listen for sobs in vain.  
She burns her past treasures one by one;  
And, mindful of joys that shall ne'er be again,  
This torrent breaks forth from her heart of stone:

'If to the darksome halls of the dead,  
On the eve of our nuptials sworn, he had gone,  
There should my heart have pillowed my head;  
A bridegroom lost were an angel won.

- 'Were it death only, one life had died—  
All but my all; but now doth he live  
To murder the honour of all beside,  
Since *his* truth and faith no more survive.
- 'Stands he revealed as a bloodless lie;  
He left me, and going, he backwards threw—  
Swearing, "All faithless, all false as I—"  
A veil over faces brave and true.
- 'Ah, Parthian! making his cursed retreat  
With slander-shafts from a recreant bow!  
Not yet can my heart the "no" repeat;  
Though well I wis that it be not so.
- 'And his leprous hand my vision anoints  
With a wizard's oil; then points mine eye;  
And yet I see only just as he points,  
Though I know him a cheat, and his art a lie.
- 'He hath left me; and isles shall join their hands  
To fish up forgotten continents;  
Tritons shall blow their shells o'er the lands;  
And the sea-gods shall quit their settlements;
- 'The old-world comets shall reappear;  
The south with the north its clime shall change;  
Systems be blithe for their cyclic year;  
But we, through the ages, for ever, be strange!' A. H. G.

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### THE CROQUET ALPHABET.

A was the Arena prepared for the fight,  
B the eight Balls that were painted so bright;  
C was the Croquet we all met to play,  
D the Division of sides for the day;  
E was the Enemy, showing great skill,  
F the four Friends, that were cleverer still;  
G was the Grumbler, who always stuck fast,  
H was the Hoop that he could not get past;  
I the Ill-will that he showed to his foes,  
J was the Jump when he hit his own toes;  
K was the Kick that he gave with the pain,  
L was the Luck that he sought for in vain;  
M was the Martyr sent off from the post,  
N was the Nuisance that bullied him most;  
O was the Onslaught the enemy made,  
P was the Pluck that the others displayed;  
Q was the Query, 'Oh! what *shall* I do?'  
R the Reply, 'Stay, I'm coming to you,'  
S was the Science we all meant to try,  
T the Temptation to spoon on the sly;  
U was the Umpire, who settled disputes,  
V the poor Vanquished, as solemn as mutes;  
W the Winners, who flourished their bats;  
X the Xcitement and waving of hats;  
Y the loud Yells, both of joy and of sorrow,  
And Z was the Zest for a game on the morrow.



From the Painting by F. Heilbuth.]

### THE ASHES OF LOVE.

"She burns her past treasures one by one."

[See the Poem.]



Drawn by M. Ellen Edwards.

# A HOLOCAUST.

[See "The Ordeal for Wives."

